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*1933.*



RECENT POETRY



R E C E N T  
P O E T R Y  
1923-1933

*Edited with an Introduction*  
*by*  
ALIDA MONRO

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## INTRODUCTION

AN anthology must always have a purpose. It may illustrate some theory or merely exhibit the vanity of the editor. This particular collection—which is strictly not an anthology—has been made with the intention of doing for the poetry of the past ten years what the five volumes of *Georgian Poetry* did for some of the poetry of the period 1911-1922.

There is, however, one vital difference. In the *Georgian Poetry* books was collected work that was representative, at least in the four volumes following that for 1911-12, of poets who showed a certain kinship in their treatment of their subjects. The present anthology, however, includes poets of all schools. The editor of *Georgian Poetry* eschewed any poetry that might appear to represent what may now be termed the Left Wing. For in the collections edited by E M (initials which no longer conceal the identity of Mr Edward Marsh), no free verse, as we understand it, found a place.

Before the first volume of E M's series was published, however, Ezra Pound was actively engaged in ploughing the furrows for the new crop of poetry. Between the issue of the first and second volumes he launched his collections, *Des Imagistes* and *Catholic Anthology*. Both of these contained work by poets who have since fully justified his foresight in assembling it for the attention of those ready to be interested.

E M was, quite rightly, anxious to show that there were a number of poets in this century whose work was equal to that produced in the last, and who differed more in kind than in degree from their Edwardian predecessors. But his ear was attuned to the glories of the past rather than to the potentialities of the future. Consequently, anyone who had never seen *Georgian Poetry* until this moment would, on studying the five

volumes, be unaware of the very great change—apart from such new subjects and changes of form as were necessitated by the war—which had overtaken English poetry since the accession of King George. He would be unaware of the existence of Mr Pound's anthologies mentioned above, and of *The Chapbook*, *Coterie*, *Wheels*, *The Owl*, to mention but a few of the publications of the years 1911-1922 in which the new poetry could be found.

Most important of all, he would not know that a poem was included in *Catholic Anthology* in 1914, and was published as a slim paper-covered volume in 1917, whose appearance passed almost unnoticed except by the most acute observers, and whose influence has been almost as disturbing to the poetry of our time as the assassination at Sarajevo was to the peace of Europe. I refer, of course, to *The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock*, by T S Eliot. At the time of its publication no one could have foretold that it was to be the source of the poetry of the next twenty years, nor that the leaven then introduced into the vat would work and work, until now, after sixteen years, it is still foaming and frothing in the productions of most of our younger poets.

It is not to be supposed that the foregoing remarks are intended in any way to depreciate the success of *Georgian Poetry*, nor to belittle the purpose of the editor, who wanted only to put poetry back into our lives. The intention is to record a passing regret that it was not then possible to include within the covers of those interesting and important volumes more varied types of poetry than these are as worthy of the title 'Georgian' as any that appeared therein, more especially as the term will in the future be understood to cover a period of years rather than a particular poetic school.

A little more than ten years having elapsed since the last volume of *Georgian Poetry* was published, and

this decade being a convenient time to look back upon, it seemed appropriate that an attempt should be made to assemble in one volume some poets who were writing during the years 1911-1922 but who had not attained any great popularity in that period, one or two who had contributed to the anthologies but who may be said to have outgrown their 'Georgian' sobriquet, and some who have acquired fame since then. A few poets have been introduced who have only lately published a book, and some who have yet not achieved publication in book form, because it seemed that they represent so definitely the outlook and technique of the present poetry. W B Yeats is included—although he can in no way be described either as a 'Georgian' or a 'neo-Georgian'—because he, above all twentieth-century writers, has bridged the tremendous gulf that cuts off the past century from 1933. His latest book, *The Winding Stair*, has unquestionably established him as the giant of our time, who represents his age both in mind and in his expression of it.

The scheme has been roughly to leave out all those poets who truly belong to the period known as 'Georgian,' among whom are John Drinkwater and W W Gibson, and such poets as D H Lawrence and Ezra Pound, who had made great reputations long before 1923. Such older writers as John Masefield and W H Davies have been omitted for similar reasons. Many poets have been included because, although their technique cannot be described as definitely modern in the accepted sense of the word, nevertheless their approach to, and treatment of, their subjects is entirely new. Pamela Travers and Francis Macnamara may be cited as examples. Unfortunately it has been impossible to include any poems by Laura Riding, who at her best is a brilliant exponent of twentieth-century technique. It is regrettable, too, that Robert Graves has to be conspicuous

by his absence The absence, in both cases, is self-imposed The Editor would have been proud to have them appear with their fellow poets, but readers of *A Pamphlet against Anthologies* will realize that the authors of this caustic work could not reasonably be included in any collection such as the present one, however 'modern' its scope

Posterity will decide whether or not this is a poetic generation If the majority of our critics are to be believed, posterity will reply in the negative On the one hand the poet is blamed for having discarded the veil behind which his Victorian predecessors hid their suspicions that all was not well with the world, on the other he is exhorted to employ the outworn poetic language that suited his grandfathers He is accused of having no faith and no ideals, of writing unintelligibly, of being too much occupied with social problems, of ignoring the 'big themes,' and of possessing no moral standards with which to improve a world waiting for a message.

In defence of the poet let this be said at once it is possible to agree that he who is the product, pure and simple, of the twentieth century—that is to say he who was born since 1900—is probably devoid of most of the qualities enumerated above, as they are understood by persons born during the sixties, seventies and eighties of last century

At no time in the history of man has there been so sudden and violent a change in his environment and circumstance as has taken place in the past twenty-five years It is far easier, in some ways, to understand the past, even the past of two hundred years ago, than it is to understand our own time, or to try to imagine what life may be like twenty years hence It is, then, not remarkable that, oppressed by every fresh scientific discovery, with the Great War behind, with the Greater

and more horrible War before him, the poet to-day should be preoccupied with subjects and forms that do not seem to fit into the preconceived notions of what constitutes poetry, according to the canons of an age in literature that is now as dead as is the Augustan age.

Again, those whose ears are too set in the mould of classical form and rhythm are not able to re-tune their tympana to catch the less obvious, but most apparent, cadences and speech rhythms that are characteristic of a great deal of the poetry of the present decade. Let the sceptic hear them read aloud and he will not fail to find that his ear (will he but allow it) will pick up the inflection and pace of the poem. If he will turn to the work of Mr Eliot, Mr Read, Mr Spender and Mr Auden as a beginning, he will find this truth at once demonstrated. The more poetry conforms to the speech rhythm of a people, the more easily will it re-enter the life of the ordinary person.

Those readers who believe that twentieth-century poetry is without faith or ideals should read 'The Witnesses,' 'The Future is not for Us,' and 'After they have Tired,' to mention only three of the many serious poems in this collection. Faith is not always best expressed by constant asseveration, nor are ideals made more manifest by perpetual reiteration such poems affirm by what they purport to deny. To cast forth illusion is not to become disillusioned. By razing a city to its foundations we can rebuild it, and from what may appear to be the ruins of a great poetic past the new town will spring. Whoever reads poetry seriously to-day cannot fail to be impressed with the faith and ideals therein expressed.

There is much to please, and much to annoy, in this little book. Whether or not we care to accept the poems as such, and whether we wish to believe it or not, the future of poetry is with the 'hollow men' of to-day.

Grateful thanks are due to authors and their literary agents for kind permission to print the copyright poems in these pages, also to the following publishers: Messrs George Allen & Unwin Ltd for poems from the *Collected Poems* of Richard Aldington, Messrs Chatto and Windus Ltd for poems by Peter Quennell, Messrs Constable & Co Ltd for poems from *The Fleeting*, by Walter de la Mare, Messrs Gerald Duckworth & Co Ltd for poems from the *Collected Poems* of Edith Sitwell and Sacheverell Sitwell, Messrs Faber and Faber Ltd for poems from *Poems 1909-1925*, by T S Eliot, *Collected Poems* of Herbert Read, and *Poems* by Stephen Spender, Messrs William Heinemann Ltd for poems from *The Heart's Journey*, by Siegfried Sassoon, Messrs Macmillan and Co Ltd and Mr W B Yeats for poems from *The Winding Stair*, Messrs Methuen & Co Ltd for poems from *Spring Encounter*, by John Pudney, and from *Autumn Values and other Poems*, by Randall Swingler, The Parton Press for poems from *Thirty Preliminary Poems*, by George Barker, The Poetry Bookshop and Messrs R Cobden-Sanderson Ltd for poems from the *Collected Poems* of Harold Monro, Mr Humphrey Milford, *The Bookman's Journal*, the Marchesa Origo, and Miss Leplat Scott, for poems by Geoffrey Scott, The Poetry Bookshop for poems by Charlotte Mew

Some of the poems in this collection have appeared in the following periodicals *The Adelphi*, *The Chapbook*, *The Dublin Magazine*, *The Listener*, *The New English Weekly*, *New Verse*, *Scrutiny*, and *The Week-End Review*, and thanks are due to the Editors for permitting me to reprint them

The poem 'Fin de Fête' by Charlotte Mew, which is reproduced in facsimile on page 92, was copied out by Thomas Hardy, and was found among his papers after his death. It has appeared in *The Sphere*. Hardy made an alteration in the punctuation of the first line of the second verse, Charlotte Mew however, did not incorporate this in a copy of the poem which she gave, with the Hardy copy, to the present writer

A M

November 1933

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RICHARD ALDINGTON

*From Songs for Puritans*

Possession

Rhapsody in a Third-class Carriage

*From SONGS FOR PURITANS*  
(111)

Euphemia studies law, Aminta  
    Inspects the ailments of the poor,  
Eudocia prays and Araminta  
    Numbers the stars on heaven's floor,  
Yet Chloe for my mistress I decree,  
Whose only art is artless love of me

'Tis not the statute binds together,  
    Physic ignores the wounds we share,  
Love works in dull or starry weather  
    And nakedness suits not with prayer,  
Then let your learning, Chloe, still consist  
In all the various ways of being kist

## POSSESSION

*Richard  
Aldington*

I must possess you utterly  
And utterly must you possess me,  
So even if that dreamer's tale  
Of heaven and hell be true  
There shall be two spirits rived together  
Either in whatever peace be heaven  
Or in the icy whirlwind that is hell  
For those who loved each other more than God—  
So that the other spirits shall cry out  
‘Ah! Look how the ancient love yet holds to them  
That these two ghosts are never driven apart  
But kiss with shadowy kisses and still take  
Joy from the mingling of their misty limbs! ’

*Richard Aldington*

## RHAPSODY IN A THIRD-CLASS CARRIAGE

Deadness of English winter, dreariness,  
cold sky over provincial towns, mist  
Melancholy of undulating trams  
solitary jangling through muddy streets,  
narrowness, imperfection, dullness,  
black extinguisher over English towns;  
mediocre women in dull clothes—  
their nudity a disaster—  
heavy cunning men (guts and passbooks),  
relics of gentry, workmen on bicycles,  
puffy small whores, baby carriages,  
shops, newspapers, bets, cinemas, allotments . . .

These are your blood, their begetters  
made in the same bed as yours  
(horror of copulation),  
colossal promiscuity of flesh through centuries  
(seed and cemeteries)  
Sculptor! show Mars  
bloody in gas-lit abattoirs,  
Apollo organist of Saint Mary's,  
Venus of High Street, Athena,  
worshipped at National schools  
Painter! there are beets in allotments,  
embankments, coal-yards, villas, grease,  
interpret the music, orchestra,  
trams, trains, cars, hobnails, factories—  
O poet! chant them to the pianola,  
to the metronome in faultless verse . . .

W. H. AUDEN

The Witnesses

THE WITNESSES

I

You dowagers with Roman noses  
Sailing along between banks of roses  
well dressed,

You Lords who sit at committee tables  
And crack with grooms in riding stables  
your father's jest,

Solicitors with poker faces,  
And doctors with black bags to cases  
hurried,

Reporters coming home at dawn  
And heavy bishops on the lawn  
by sermons worried;

You stokers lit by furnace-glare,  
And you, too, steeplejacks up there  
singing,

You shepherds wind-blown on the ridges,  
Tramps leaning over village bridges  
your eardrums ringing,

On land, on sea, in field, in town  
Attend Musician put them down,  
those trumpets,  
Let go, young lover, of her hand  
Come forward both of you and stand  
as still as limpets

Close as you can and listen well  
My companion here is about to tell  
a story,

Peter, Pontius Pilate, Paul  
Whoever you are, it concerns you all  
and human glory

Call him Prince Alpha if you wish  
 He was born in a palace, his people were swish;  
     his christening  
 Was called by the Tatler the event of the year,  
 All the photographed living were there  
     and the dead were listening.

You would think I was trying to foozle you  
 If I told you all that kid could do;  
     enough  
 To say he was never afraid of the dark  
 He climbed all the trees in his pater's park;  
     his nurse thought him rough.

At school his brilliance was a mystery,  
 All languages, science, maths, and history  
     he knew,  
 His style at cricket was simply stunning  
 At rugger, soccer, hockey, running  
     and swimming too

The days went by, he grew mature,  
 He was a looker you may be sure,  
     so straight  
 Old couples cried 'God bless my soul'  
 I thought that man was a telegraph pole '  
     when he passed their gate.

His eyes were blue as a mountain lake,  
 He made the hearts of the girls to ache,  
     he was strong,  
 He was gay, he was witty, his speaking voice  
 Sounded as if a large Rolls-Royce  
     had passed along

What did he do? What didn't he do,  
He rescued maidens, overthrew  
                  ten giants  
Like factory chimneys, slaughtered dragons,  
Though their heads were larger than railway waggons  
                  tamed their defiance.

There on a stone he sat him down,  
Around the desert stretching brown  
                        like the tide,  
Above the blue sky arching wide  
Two black rocks on either side  
                        and, O how he cried.

' I thought my strength could know no stemming  
But I was foolish as a lemming,  
for what

W. H.  
Auden

Was I born, was it only to see  
I'm as tired of life as life of me?  
let me be forgot

Children have heard of my every action  
It gives me no sort of satisfaction  
and why?

Let me get this as clear as I possibly can  
No, I am not the truly strong man,  
O let me die '

There in the desert all alone  
He sat for hours on a long flat stone  
and sighed,  
Above the blue sky arching wide  
Two black rocks on either side,  
and then he died.

Now ladies and gentlemen, big and small,  
This story of course has a morale,  
again

Unless like him you wish to die  
Listen, while my friend and I  
proceed to explain.

### III

What had he done to be treated thus?  
If you want to know, he'd offended us.  
for yes,

We guard the wells, we're handy with a gun,  
We've a very special sense of fun,  
we curse and bless.

*W. H.  
Auden*

You are the town, and we are the clock,  
We are the guardians of the gate in the rock,  
                  the Two,  
On your left, and on your right  
In the day, and in the night  
                  we are watching you

Wiser not to ask just what has occurred  
To them that disobeyed our word;  
                  to those  
We were the whirlpool, we were the reef,  
We were the formal nightmare, grief,  
                  and the unlucky rose.

Climb up the cranes, learn the sailors' words  
When the ships from the islands, laden with birds  
                  come in,  
Tell you stories of fishing and other men's wives,  
The expansive moments of constricted lives,  
                  in the lighted inn.

By all means say of the peasant youth  
'That person there is in the truth'  
                  we're kind  
Tire of your little rut and look it,  
You have to obey but you don't have to like it,  
                  we do not mind.

But do not imagine we do not know  
Or that what you hide with care won't show  
                  at a glance,  
Nothing is done, nothing is said  
But don't make the mistake of thinking us dead;  
                  I shouldn't dance

For I'm afraid in that case you'll have a fall,  
We've been watching you over the garden wall  
                for hours,

The sky is darkening like a stain,  
Something is going to fall like rain  
                and it won't be flowers

When the green field comes off like a lid  
Revealing what were much better hid,  
                unpleasant,

And look! behind without a sound  
The woods have come up and are standing round  
                in deadly crescent

And the bolt is sliding in its groove,  
Outside the window is the black remov-  
                er's van,

And now with sudden swift emergence  
Come the women in dark glasses, the hump-backed  
                surgeons  
                and the scissor-man

This might happen any day  
So be careful what you say  
                or do  
Be clean, be tidy, oil the lock,  
Trim the garden, wind the clock  
                Remember the Two

W H  
Auden



GEORGE BARKER

Ode



## ODE

George  
Barker

O to us speak  
Bleak snow  
With your mellifluous smooth tongue

What have we done wrong  
What wrong have we done,  
Our strongest perish without an answering blow  
Our strongest young  
Hour by hour grow weaker,  
While we like prisoners look on  
Awaiting our warmth and storage, our ally, the Sun

Return from the west  
Our hour is come,  
Release the squirrel from its frozen nest  
The worm from solid mould,  
Cremate to comfortable dust  
Our old, and immediately reduce  
The icy fortifications of our adversary,  
Dissolve with lightning the imprisoning cold

Arm with miraculous beams our youth  
Clothed in the habiliments of your warmth,  
And resuscitate all fiery spirits from their death



RONALD BOTTRALL

Ploughing

The Future is not for Us

Blackbird

On a Grave of the Drowned

## PLOUGHING

With an underthrust he jolts  
The plough round from its furrow,  
Deftly wristing his steamed  
Pair to a corner row

Wave-lined through the mist-lake  
Which nuzzles blue among the clods,  
Come foraging in his wake  
Two or three pied gulls

Life upturned towards sunlight  
Is snatched to living death  
By the seated parasite,  
Black after the horseman

## THE FUTURE IS NOT FOR US

Ronald  
Bottrall

The future is not for us, though we can set up  
Our barriers, rest in our dead-embered  
Sphere, till we come to pause over our last loving-cup  
With death We are dismembered  
Into a myriad broken shadows,  
Each to himself reflected in a splinter of that glass  
Which we once knew as cosmos, and the close  
Of our long progress is hinted by the crass  
Fogs creeping slow and darkly  
From out the middle west We can humanize,  
We can build new temples for the body,  
Set our intellect to tilt against the spies  
Of fortune, call this Chance or that Fate,  
Estimate the logical worth of 'it may depend . . .'  
But we know that we are at the gate  
Leading out of the path  
Which was to be an Amen having neither beginning nor  
end

It was said, 'Take no thought for the morrow',  
Better, truly, to take no thought of to-day,  
For we are bankrupt indeed if we cannot borrow  
At least an expectation of future pay  
Remains then but to seize  
Each one alone, his smoky taper  
And climb the stairs, knowing each step in the rear  
Has crumpled beneath like tissue paper,  
Disclosing the blue-black inkblot  
Of vacuity beneath our sinking knees,  
Then to set our fingers on the latch with the hope or fear  
That within there lies the Is or Is Not

## BLACKBIRD

Do you find no burden in singing?  
You catch up boughs, buds, leaves, anything  
Even to the red-brick houses and whatever  
Of scrubbed growth they may enclose, never  
Querying your right to engulf your neighbours,  
To pour them molten into the cup of your song.  
You do not set one foot circumspectly along  
Before the other, doling out your hours  
In grains of sand,  
Counting up to a thousand.

## ON A GRAVE OF THE DROWNED

Ronald  
Bottrall

They whittle their life-stick who go  
Down to the threshing jaws Goodbye  
To the smutty lamp, goodbyes are hoarse,  
Disused 'Draw the last pint!' There in the  
Oil-black bay the muttering nets, a gale  
Blowing against the wet finger Gull once a  
W pencilled against the gray, now  
Dismantled, maimed and set upon by friends:  
Beaten off by bloody beaks, crunched feathers  
Strike the shale ledges, wearily take  
The backward, forward of the foam

These went the watery bridge to know  
Or numb, insurgent, on thole-pins spent  
The dizzy creak of racked sinews and  
Stalled with a thew-thrust, whipcord taut,  
Jarring alarms of singing drowsiness  
Then glaucous eyes crammed full

Above that mounded tale of many,  
Disintegrated one, a beacon autumn tree  
Irradiated from within swirls  
Outward in eddies of russet light



ROY CAMPBELL

Horses on the Camargue

The Zebras

Choosing a Mast

## HORSES ON THE CAMARGUE

In the grey wastes of dread,  
The haunt of shattered gulls where nothing moves  
But in a shroud of silence like the dead,  
I heard a sudden harmony of hooves,  
And, turning, saw afar  
A hundred snowy horses unconfined,  
The silver runaways of Neptune's car  
Racing, spray-curled, like waves before the wind  
Sons of the Mistral, fleet  
As him with whose strong gusts they love to flee,  
Who shod the flying thunders on their feet  
And plumed them with the snortings of the sea,  
There is no earthly breed  
Who only haunt the verges of the earth  
And only on the sea's salt herbage feed—  
Surely the great white breakers gave them birth.  
For when for years a slave,  
A horse of the Camargue, in alien lands,  
Should catch some far-off fragrance of the wave  
Carried far inland from his native sands,  
Many have told the tale  
Of how in fury, foaming at the rein,  
He hurls his rider, and with lifted tail,  
With coal-red eyes and cataracting mane,  
Heading his course for home,  
Though sixty foreign leagues before him sweep,  
Will never rest until he breathes the foam  
And hears the native thunder of the deep.  
But when the great gusts rise  
And lash their anger on these arid coasts,  
When the scared gulls career with mournful cries  
And whirl across the waste like driven ghosts  
When hail and fire converge,  
The only souls to which they strike no pain

Are the white-crested fillies of the surge  
And the white horses of the windy plain  
Then in their strength and pride  
The stallions of the wilderness rejoice,  
They feel their Master's trident in their side,  
And high and shrill they answer to his voice.  
With white tails smoking free,  
Long streaming manes, and arching necks, they show  
Their kinship to their sisters of the sea—  
And forward hurl their thunderbolts of snow.  
Still out of hardship bred,  
Spirits of power and beauty and delight  
Have ever on such frugal pastures fed  
And loved to course with tempests through the night.

*Roy  
Campbell*

*Roy  
Campbell*

## THE ZEBRAS

From the dark woods that breathe of fallen showers,  
Harnessed with level rays in golden reins,  
The zebras draw the dawn across the plains  
Wading knee-deep among the scarlet flowers  
The sunlight, zithering their flanks with fire,  
Flashes between the shadows as they pass  
Barred with electric tremors through the grass  
Like wind along the gold strings of a lyre

Into the flushed air snorting rosy plumes  
That smoulder round their feet in drifting fumes,  
With dove-like voices call the distant fillies,  
While round the herds the stallion wheels his flight,  
Engine of beauty volted with delight,  
To roll his mare among the trampled lilies

## CHOOSING A MAST

Roy  
Campbell

This mast, new-shaved, through whom I rive the ropes,  
Says she was once an oread of the slopes,  
Graceful and tall upon the rocky highlands,  
A slender tree, as vertical as noon,  
And her low voice was lovely as the silence  
Through which a fountain whistles to the moon,  
Who now of the white spray must take the veil  
And, for her songs, the thunder of the sail

I chose her for her fragrance, when the spring  
With sweetest resins swelled her fourteenth ring  
And with live amber welded her young thews  
I chose her for the glory of the Muse,  
Smoother of forms, that her hard-knotted grain,  
Grazed by the chisel, shaven by the plane,  
Might from the steel as cool a burnish take  
As from the bladed moon a windless lake

I chose her for her eagerness of flight  
Where she stood tiptoe on the rocky height  
Lifted by her own perfume to the sun,  
While through her rustling plumes with eager sound  
Her eagle spirit, with the gale at one,  
Spreading wide pinions, would have spurned the ground  
And her own sleeping shadow, had they not  
With thymy fragrance charmed her to the spot.

Lover of song, I chose this mountain pine  
Not only for the straightness of her spine  
But for her songs for there she loved to sing  
Through a long noon's repose of wave and wing—  
The fluvial swirling of her scented hair  
Sole rill of song in all that windless air  
And her slim form the naïad of the stream  
Afloat upon the languor of its theme,

*Roy Campbell* And for the soldier's fare on which she fed—  
Her wine the azure, and the snow her bread;  
And for her stormy watches on the height—  
For only out of solitude or strife  
Are born the sons of valour and delight,  
And lastly for her rich exulting life  
That with the wind stopped not its singing breath  
But carolled on, the louder for its death

Under a pine, when summer days were deep,  
We loved the most to lie in love or sleep  
And when in long hexameters the west  
Rolled his grey surge, the forest for his lyre,  
It was the pines that sang us to our rest  
Loud in the wind and fragrant in the fire,  
With legioned voices swelling all night long,  
From Pelion to Provence, their storm of song.

It was the pines that fanned us in the heat,  
The pines, that cheered us in the time of sleet,  
For which sweet gifts I set one dryad free—  
No longer to the wind a rooted foe,  
This nymph shall wander where she longs to be  
And with the blue north wind arise and go,  
A silver huntress with the moon to run  
And fly through rainbows with the rising sun,

And when to pasture in the glittering shoals  
The guardian mistral drives his thundering foals,  
And when like Tartar horsemen racing free  
We ride the snorting fillies of the sea,  
My pine shall be the archer of the gale  
While on the bending willow curves the sail  
From whose great bow the long keel shooting home  
Shall fly, the feathered arrow of the foam.

WALTER DE LA MARE

The Strange Spirit  
To K M.

## THE STRANGE SPIRIT

Age shall not daunt me, nor sorrow for youth that is gone,  
If thou lead on before me,  
If thy voice in the darkness and bleak of that final night  
Still its enchantment weave over me  
Thou hauntest the stealing shadow of rock and tree,  
Hov'ring on wings invisible smildest at me,  
Fannest the secret scent of the moth-hung flower,  
Making of musky eve thy slumber-bower

But not without danger thy fleeting presence abides  
In a mind lulled in dreaming  
Lightning bepictures thy gaze When the thunder raves,  
And the tempest rain is streaming,  
Betwixt cloud and earth thy falcon-head leans near—  
Menacing earth-bound spirit betrayed to fear  
Cold then as shadow of death, that icy glare  
Pierces the window of sense to the chamber bare

Busied o'er dust, engrossed o'er the clod-close root,  
Fire of the beast in conflict bleeding,  
Goal of the coursing fish on its ocean tryst,  
Wind of the weed's far seeding,  
Whose servant art thou? Who gave thee earth, sky  
and sea  
For uttermost kingdom and ranging? Who bade thee  
to be  
Bodiless, lovely, snare, and delight of the soul,  
Fantasy's beacon, of thought the uttermost goal?

When I told my love thou wert near, she bowed, and  
sighed.  
With passion her pale face darkened  
Trembling the lips that to mine in silence replied,  
Sadly that music she hearkened

Miracle thine the babe in her bosom at rest,  
Flowerlike, hidden loose-folded on gentle breast—  
And we laughed together in quiet, unmoved by fear,  
Knowing that, life of life, thou wast hovering near.

*Walter  
de la  
Mare*

*And there was a horse in the king's stables and the name  
of the horse was, Genius*

We sat and talked It was June, and the summer light  
Lay fair upon ceiling and wall as the day took flight  
Tranquil the room—with its colours and shadows wan,  
Cherries, and china, and flowers and the hour slid on  
Dark hair, dark eyes, slim fingers—you made the tea,  
Pausing with spoon uplifted, to speak to me  
Lulled by our thoughts and our voices, how happy were  
we!

And, musing, an old, old riddle crept into my head,  
'Supposing I just say, *Horse in a field*,' I said,  
'What do you see?' And we each made answer 'I  
A roan—long tail, and a red-brick house, near by'  
'I—an old cart-horse and rain!' 'Oh no, not rain,  
A mare with a long legged foal by a pond—oh plain!'  
'And I, a hedge—and an elm—and the shadowy green  
Sloping gently up to the blue, to the West, I mean!' . . .

And now on the field that I see night's darkness lies  
A brook brawls near there are stars in the empty skies.  
The grass is deep, and dense As I push my way,  
From sour-nettled ditch sweeps fragrance of clustering  
May

I come to a stile And lo, on the further side,  
With still, umbrageous, night-clad fronds, spread wide,  
A giant cedar broods And in crescent's gleam—  
A horse, milk-pale, sleek-shouldered, engendered of  
dream!

Startled, it lifts its muzzle, deep eyes agaze,  
Silk-plaited mane . . .

'Whose pastures are thine to graze?

Creature, delicate, lovely, with womanlike head,  
Sphinx-like, gazelle-like? Where tarries thy rider? '  
I said

Walter  
*de la  
Mare*

And I scanned by that sinking slip's thin twinkling shed  
A high-pooped saddle of leather, night-darkened red,  
Stamped with a pattern of gilding, and over it thrown  
A cloak, chain-buckled, with one great glamorous stone,  
Wan as the argent moon when o'er fields of wheat  
Like Dian she broods, and steals to Endymion's feet  
Interwoven with silver that cloak from seam to seam  
And at toss of that head from its damascened bridle did  
beam

Mysterious glare in the dead of the dark . . .

' Thy name,  
Fantastical steed? Thy pedigree?  
*Peace, out of Storm, is the tale? Or Beauty, of Jeopardy?*'  
The water grieves Not a footfall—and midnight here  
Why tarries Darkness's bird? Mounded and clear  
Slopes to yon hill with its stars the moorland sweet  
There sigh the airs of far heaven And the dreamer's  
feet

Scatter the leagues of paths secret to where at last meet  
Roads called Wickedness, Righteousness, broad-flung or  
strait,

And the third that leads on to the Queen of fair Elfland's  
gate

This then the horse that I see, swift as the wind,  
That none may master or mount, and none may bind—  
But she, his Mistress, cloaked, and at throat that gem—  
Dark head, dark eyes, slim shoulder . . .

God-speed, K M!



T. S. ELIOT

The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock

La Figlia Che Piange

The Hollow Men

Triumphal March

## THE LOVE SONG OF J ALFRED PRUFROCK

*S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse  
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,  
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.  
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo  
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i' odo il vero,  
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo*

Let us go then, you and I,  
When the evening is spread out against the sky  
Like a patient etherised upon a table,  
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,  
The muttering retreats  
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels  
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells  
Streets that follow like a tedious argument  
Of insidious intent  
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .  
Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'  
Let us go and make our visit

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,  
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes  
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,  
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,  
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,  
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,  
And seeing that it was a soft October night,  
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep

And indeed there will be time  
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,  
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes,  
There will be time, there will be time  
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet,  
There will be time to murder and create,  
And time for all the works and days of hands  
That lift and drop a question on your plate,  
Time for you and time for me,  
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea

T. S.  
Eliot

In the room the women come and go  
Talking of Michelangelo

And indeed there will be time  
To wonder, 'Do I dare?' and 'Do I dare?'

Time to turn back and descend the stair,  
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—  
(They will say. 'How his hair is growing thin!')  
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,  
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple  
pin—

(They will say. 'But how his arms and legs are thin!')  
Do I dare

Disturb the universe?

In a minute there is time

For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse

For I have known them all already, known them all  
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,  
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons,  
I know the voices dying with a dying fall  
Beneath the music from a farther room.

So how should I presume?

*T. S.  
Eliot*

And I have known the eyes already, known them all—  
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,  
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,  
Then how should I begin  
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?  
And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—  
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare  
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)  
Is it a perfume from a dress  
That makes me so digress?  
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.  
And should I then presume?  
And how should I begin?

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets  
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes  
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows?

I should have been a pair of ragged claws  
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!  
Smoothed by long fingers,  
Asleep      tired      or it malingers,  
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me  
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,  
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?  
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed  
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)  
                        brought in upon a platter,  
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;

I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker                      *T S*  
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and *Eloot*  
snicker,  
And in short, I was afraid

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,  
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and  
me,

Would it have been worth while,  
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,  
To have squeezed the universe into a ball  
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,  
To say 'I am Lazarus, come from the dead,  
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all'—  
If one, settling a pillow by her head,  
Should say 'That is not what I meant at all  
That is not it, at all'

And would it have been worth it, after all,  
Would it have been worth while,  
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled  
streets,  
After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that  
trail along the floor—  
And this, and so much more?—  
It is impossible to say just what I mean!  
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on  
a screen  
Would it have been worth while  
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,  
And turning toward the window, should say:  
‘That is not it at all,  
That is not what I meant, at all.’

*T. S.  
Eliot*

No ! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;  
Am an attendant lord, one that will do  
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,  
Advise the prince, no doubt, an easy tool,  
Deferential, glad to be of use,  
Politic, cautious, and meticulous,  
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse,  
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—  
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old      I grow old  
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled

Shall I part my hair behind ? Do I dare to eat a peach?  
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the  
beach  
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves  
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back  
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea  
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown  
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

LA FIGLIA CHE PIANGE

*O quam te memorem virgo*

T. S.  
Eliot

Stand on the highest pavement of the stair—  
Lean on a garden urn—  
Weave, weave the sunlight in your hair—  
Clasp your flowers to you with a pained surprise—  
Fling them to the ground and turn  
With a fugitive resentment in your eyes  
But weave, weave the sunlight in your hair.

So I would have had him leave,  
So I would have had her stand and grieve,  
So he would have left  
As the soul leaves the body torn and bruised,  
As the mind deserts the body it has used  
I should find  
Some way incomparably light and deft,  
Some way we both should understand,  
Simple and faithless as a smile and shake of the hand.

She turned away, but with the autumn weather  
Compelled my imagination many days,  
Many days and many hours  
Her hair over her arms and her arms full of flowers.  
And I wonder how they should have been together!  
I should have lost a gesture and a pose  
Sometimes these cogitations still amaze  
The troubled midnight and the noon's repose.

## THE HOLLOW MEN

*A penny for the Old Guy*

I

We are the hollow men  
We are the stuffed men  
Leaning together  
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!  
Our dried voices, when  
We whisper together  
Are quiet and meaningless  
As wind in dry grass  
Or rats' feet over broken glass  
In our dry cellar

Shape without form, shade without colour,  
Paralysed force, gesture without motion,

Those who have crossed  
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom  
Remember us—if at all—not as lost  
Violent souls, but only  
As the hollow men  
The stuffed men

II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams  
In death's dream kingdom  
These do not appear  
There, the eyes are  
Sunlight on a broken column  
There, is a tree swinging  
And voices are  
In the wind's singing  
More distant and more solemn  
Than a fading star

Let me be no nearer  
In death's dream kingdom  
Let me also wear  
Such deliberate disguises  
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves  
In a field  
Behaving as the wind behaves  
No nearer—

T S  
Eliot

Not that final meeting  
In the twilight kingdom

III

This is the dead land  
This is cactus land  
Here the stone images  
Are raised, here they receive  
The supplication of a dead man's hand  
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this  
In death's other kingdom  
Waking alone  
At the hour when we are  
Trembling with tenderness  
Lips that would kiss  
Form prayers to broken stone

IV

The eyes are not here  
There are no eyes here  
In this valley of dying stars  
In this hollow valley  
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms

T. S.  
Eliot

In this last of meeting places  
We grope together  
And avoid speech  
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river

Sightless, unless  
The eyes reappear  
As the perpetual star  
Multifoliate rose  
Of death's twilight kingdom  
The hope only  
Of empty men

v

*Here we go round the prickly pear  
Prickly pear prickly pear  
Here we go round the prickly pear  
At five o'clock in the morning*

Between the idea  
And the reality  
Between the motion  
And the act  
Falls the Shadow

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow

*Life is very long*

Between the desire  
And the spasm  
Between the potency  
And the existence  
Between the essence

And the descent  
Falls the Shadow

T. S.  
Eliot

*For Thine is the Kingdom*

For Thine is  
Life is  
For Thine is the

*This is the way the world ends*  
*This is the way the world ends*  
*This is the way the world ends*  
*Not with a bang but a whimper*

## TRIUMPHAL MARCH

Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels  
Over the paving  
And the flags And the trumpets And so many eagles  
How many? Count them And such a press of people  
We hardly knew ourselves that day, or knew the City.  
This is the way to the temple, and we so many crowding  
the way

So many waiting, how many waiting? what did it matter,  
on such a day?

Are they coming? No, not yet You can see some  
eagles

And hear the trumpets  
Here they come Is he coming?  
The natural wakeful life of our Ego is a perceiving.  
We can wait with our stools and our sausages  
What comes first? Can you see? Tell us It is

5,800,000 rifles and carbines,  
102,000 machine guns,  
28,000 trench mortars,  
53,000 field and heavy guns,  
I cannot tell how many projectiles, mines and fuses,  
13,000 aeroplanes,  
24,000 aeroplane engines,  
50,000 ammunition waggons,  
now 55,000 army waggons,  
11,000 field kitchens  
1,150 field bakeries.

What a time that took. Will it be he now? No,  
Those are the golf club Captains, these the Scouts,  
And now the *société gymnastique de Poissy*  
And now come the Mayor and the Liverymen. Look  
There he is now, look.

There is no interrogation in those eyes  
Or in the hands, quiet over the horse's neck,  
And the eyes watchful, waiting, perceiving, indifferent.  
O hidden under the dove's wing, hidden in the turtle's  
breast,  
Under the palm-tree at noon, under the running water  
At the still point of the turning world O hidden.

T. S.  
Eliot

Now they go up to the temple Then the sacrifice  
Now come the virgins bearing urns, urns containing  
Dust  
Dust  
Dust of dust, and now  
Stone, bronze, stone, steel, stone, oakleaves, horses' heels  
Over the paving  
That is all we could see. But how many eagles! and  
how many trumpets!  
(And Easter Day, we didn't get to the country,  
So we took young Cyril to church And they rang a bell  
And he said right out loud, *crumpets*)  
Don't throw away that sausage,  
It'll come in handy. He's artful. Please, will you  
Give us a light?  
Light  
Light  
*Et les soldats faisaient la hale? ILS LA FAISAIENT.*



WILLIAM EMPSON

Arachne

Villanelle

## ARACHNE

'Twixt devil and deep sea, man hacks his caves,  
Birth, death, one, many, what is true, and seems,  
Earth's vast hot iron, cold space's empty waves

King spider, walks the velvet roof of streams,  
Must bird and fish, must god and beast avoid,  
Dance, like nine angels, on pin-point extremes

His gleaming bubble between void and void,  
Tribe-membrane, that by mutual tension stands,  
Earth's surface film, is at a breath destroyed.

Bubbles gleam brightest with least depth of lands  
But two is least can with full tension strain,  
Two molecules, one, and the film disbands

.We two suffice    But oh beware, whose vain  
Hydroptic soap my meagre water saves  
Male spiders must not be too early slain

## VILLANELLE

*William  
Empson*

It is the pain, it is the pain, endures  
Your chemic beauty burned my muscles through  
Poise of my hands reminded me of yours

What later purge from this deep toxin cures?  
What kindness now could the old salve renew?  
It is the pain, it is the pain, endures

The infection slept (custom or change inures)  
And when pain's secondary phase was due  
Poise of my hands reminded me of yours

How safe I felt, whom memory assures,  
Rich that your grace safely by heart I knew  
It is the pain, it is the pain, endures

My stare drank deep beauty that still allures  
My heart pumps yet the poison draught of you.  
Poise of my hands reminded me of yours

You are still kind whom the same shape immures  
Kind, and beyond adieu We miss our cue  
It is the pain, it is the pain, endures  
Poise of my hands reminded me of yours



DAVID GASCOYNE

Susan. a Carving by Eric Gill

Slate

In Perpetuum Mobile

*David  
Gascoyne*

SUSAN

*A carving by Eric Gill*

The fingers ~~of~~ the air caress your face;  
you are so smooth and yet your stone is firm,  
inevitable, like volcanic rock  
that bursting molten through to air  
at once sets firm and is unaltr'able

The rock has formed spontaneously your face,  
and natural as the waves that run through corn  
your curved and flowing hair, your petalled lips,  
and empty eyes that show no soul although a soul is there.

## SLATE

*David  
Gascoyne*

Behind the higher hill  
sky slides away to fringe of crumbling cloud;  
out of the gorse-grown slope  
the quarry bites its tessellated tiers

The rain-eroded slate packs loose and flat  
in broken sheets and frigid swathes of stone,  
like withered petals of a great grey flower.

The quarry is deserted now, within  
a scooped-out niche of rubble, dust and silt  
a single slate-roofed hut to ruin falls.

A petrified chaos  
the quarry is, the slate makes still-born waves,  
or crumbling clouds like those  
behind the hill, monotonously grey.

## IN PERPETUUM MOBILE

Too tightly tangled are mixed notions,  
Wide ocean's wrack-worn tracks trace whorling wheels,  
The vampire sun sucks up the sea's salt scum  
And twists it into cloud that rolls or reels  
In woven webs across the crystal sky,  
The sun's barbaric cock'rel comb of fire  
Royally rages, reaching many miles,  
Revolving regent rays that outwardly expire,  
The system which has sun for centre spins  
Round other systems that are cogs for more  
Which act on others to the orbit's end,—  
Continual correlation, endless war  
Unending Motion changes as it goes,  
Like glyptic flame or shifting waterfall,  
One moment is, then metamorphosis  
Alters what was before to not at all  
Disintegration is th' uncertain seed  
Of Motion, making all seen things seem  
A nystagmus, leaving no proof to show  
That what we saw or shall see is not dream.

OLIVER GOGARTY

The Plum Tree by the House  
With a Coin from Syracuse

## THE PLUM TREE BY THE HOUSE

In morning light my damson showed  
Its airy branches oversnowed  
On all their quickening fronds,  
That tingled where the early sun  
Was flowing soft as silence on  
Palm trees by coral ponds  
Out of the dark of sleep I come  
To find the clay break into bloom,  
The black boughs all in white!  
I said, I must stand still and watch  
This glory, strive no more to match  
With similes things fair  
I am not fit to conjure up  
A bird that's white enough to hop  
Unstained in such a tree  
Leave me alone with my delight  
To store up joy against the night,  
This moment leave to me!  
Why should a poet strain his head  
To make his mind a marriage bed,  
Shall Beauty cease to bear?  
There must be things which never shall  
Be matched or made symmetrical  
On Earth or in the Air,  
Branches that Chinese draughtsmen drew,  
Which none may find an equal to,  
Unless he enter there  
Where none may live—and more's the pity!—  
The Perfect, The Forbidden City,  
That's built—Ah, God knows where!  
Then leave me while I have the light  
To fill my mind with growths of white,  
Think of them longer than  
Their budding hour, their springing day,

Until my mind is more than May;  
And, may be, I shall plan  
To make them yet break out like this  
And blossom where their image is,  
More lasting and more deep  
Than coral boughs in light inurned,  
When they are to the earth returned,  
And I am turned to sleep.

*Oliver  
Gogarty*

## WITH A COIN FROM SYRACUSE

Where is the hand to trace  
The contour of her face.  
The nose so straight and fine  
Down from the forehead's line;

The curved and curtail lip  
Full in companionship  
With that lip's overplus,  
Proud and most sumptuous,

Which draws its curve within,  
Swelling the faultless chin?  
What artist knows the tech-  
nique of the Doric neck.

The line that keeps with all  
The features vertical,  
Crowned with the thickly rolled  
And corrugated gold?

The curious hands are lost  
On the sweet Asian coast,  
That made the coins enwrought,  
(Fairer than all they bought)

With emblems round the proud  
Untroubled face of god  
And goddess Or they lie  
At Syracuse hard by

The Fountain Arethuse.  
Therefore from Syracuse  
I send this face to her,  
Whose face is lovelier,

Alas, and as remote  
As hers around whose throat  
The curving fishes swim,  
As round a fountain's brim.

*Oliver  
Gogarty*

It shows on the reverse  
Pherenikos the horse,  
And that's as it should be.  
Horses she loves, for she

Is come of the old stock,  
Lords of the lime-stone rock,  
And acres fit to breed  
Many a likely steed,

Straight in the back and bone,  
With head high, like her own,  
And blood that, tamed and mild,  
Can suddenly go wild



RICHARD GOODMAN

Poem with Cowslips

Poem, 1933

## POEM WITH COWSLIPS

Who walked our English fields of late  
and saw their trembling April born  
from fern-frond, leaf-lithe, lance of corn,  
the hanging kestrel leashed with light,  
the willow-green, the whitlow-white,  
the daffodils', oh, catch-breath fête,  
the mass and mutiny of dawn,  
comrade, to you I send these few,  
these English, cowslips softly signed  
still with that silver-point, the dew,  
to prove in other fields than these  
here in my heart and secret mind  
a beauty flares in your retreat,  
these cowslips' startled loveliness,  
pale gold, the havoc of your feet

POEM, 1933

*Richard  
Goodman*

Huge images of death lurk in my brain  
and track me where I go,  
here in this city, here in Summer's plain,  
I am smothered under shadow

Not being with friends nor even this tall day  
where the light sings  
brings peace, release from these· I cannot play  
nor find my joy in things

They are my thoughts of war and war's disease,  
I move with men  
and watch an equal dark behind each face  
striking them iron

Over my love and breaking on my joy  
this fear descends  
I see guns shatter and slow fog destroy  
my friends, my lovely friends



F. R HIGGINS  
Father and Son  
Padraic Ó Conaire—Gaelic Storyteller

Only last week, walking the hushed fields  
Of our most lovely Meath, now thinned by November,  
I came to where the road from Laracor leads  
To the Boyne river—that seemed more lake than river,  
Stretched in uneasy light and stript of reeds

And walking longside an old weir  
Of my people's, where nothing stirs—only the shadowed  
Leaden flight of a heron up the lean air—  
I went unmanly with grief, knowing how my father,  
Happy though captive in years, walked last with me there.

Yes, happy in Meath with me for a day  
He walked, taking stock of herds hid in their own  
breathing,  
And naming colts, gusty as wind, once steered by his  
hand  
Lightnings winked in the eyes that were half shy in  
greeting  
Old friends—the wild blades, when he gallivanted the  
land.

For that proud, wayward man now my heart breaks—  
Breaks for that man whose mind was a secret eyrie,  
Whose kind hand was sole signet of his race,  
Who curbed me, scorned my green ways, yet increasingly  
loved me  
Till Death drew its grey blind down his face

And yet I am pleased that even my reckless ways  
Are living shades of his rich calms and passions—  
Witnesses for him and for those faint namesakes  
With whom now he is one, under yew branches,  
Yes, one in a graven silence no bird breaks

PADRAIC O CONAIRE—GAELIC STORYTELLER *F. R.*  
*Higgins*  
(Died in the Fall of 1928)

They've paid the last respects in sad tobacco  
And silent is this wakehouse in its haze,  
They've paid the last respects, and now their whiskey  
Flings laughing words on mouths of prayer and praise,  
And so young couples huddle by the gables,  
O let them grope home through the hedgy night—  
Alone I'll mourn my old friend, while the cold dawn  
Thins out the holy candlelight.

Respects are paid to one loved by the people,  
Ah, was he not—among our mighty poor—  
The sudden wealth cast on those pools of darkness,  
Those bearing, just, a star's faint signature?  
And so he was to me, close friend, near brother,  
Dear Padraic of the wide and sea-cold eyes—  
So loveable, so courteous and noble,  
The very West was in his soft replies.

They'll miss his heavy stick and stride in Wicklow—  
His story-talking down Winetavern Street,  
Where old men sitting in the wizen daylight  
Have kept an edge upon his gentle wit,  
While women on the grassy streets of Galway,  
Who hearken for his passing—but in vain,  
Shall hardly tell his step as shadows vanish  
Through archways of forgotten Spain

Ah, they'll say. Padraic's gone again exploring,  
But now down glens of brightness, O he'll find  
An alehouse overflowing with wise Gaelic  
That's braced in vigour by the bardic mind,

*F. R.  
Higgins* And there his thoughts shall find their own forefathers—  
In minds to whom our heights of race belong,  
In crafty men, who ribbed a ship or turned  
The secret joinery of song

Alas, death mars the parchment of his forehead,  
And yet for him, I know, the earth is mild—  
The windy fidgets of September grasses  
Can never tease a mind that loved the wild,  
So drink his peace—this grey juice of the barley  
Runs with a light that ever pleased his eye—  
While old flames nod and gossip on the hearthstone  
And only the young winds cry

CECIL DAY LEWIS

- From Feathers to Iron (1)  
The Magnetic Mountain (3)  
The Magnetic Mountain (21)  
The Magnetic Mountain (24)

## FROM FEATHERS TO IRON (1)

Suppose that we, to-morrow or the next day,  
Came to an end—in storm the shafting broken,  
Or a mistaken signal, the flange lifting—  
Would that be premature, a text for sorrow?

Say what endurance gives or death denies us  
Love's proved in its creation, not eternity  
Like leaf or linnet the true heart's affection  
Is born, dies later, asks no reassurance

Over dark wood rises one dawn felicitous,  
Bright through awakened shadows fall her crystal  
Cadenzas, and once for all the wood is quickened  
So our joy visits us, and it suffices

Nor fear we now to live who in the valley  
Of the shadow of life have found a causeway,  
For love restores the nerve and love is under  
Our feet resilient Shall we be weary?

Some say we walk out of Time altogether  
This way into a region where the primrose  
Shows an immortal dew, sun at meridian  
Stands up for ever and in scent the lime-tree

This is a land which later we may tell of  
Here-now we know, what death cannot diminish  
Needs no replenishing, yet certain are, though  
Dying were well enough, to live is better

Passion has grown full man by his first birthday  
Running across the bean-fields in a south wind,  
Fording the river mouth to feel the tide-race—  
Child's play that was, though proof of our possessions

*Cecil  
Day  
Lewis*

Now our research is done, measured the shadow,  
The plains mapped out, the hills a natural bound'ry  
Such and such is our country There remains to  
Plough up the meadowland, reclaim the marshes.

## THE MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN (3)

Somewhere beyond the railheads  
Of reason, south or north,  
Lies a magnetic mountain  
Riveting sky to earth

No line is laid so far  
Ties rusting in a stack  
And sleepers—dead men's bones  
Mark a defeated track

Kestrel who yearly changes  
His tenement of space  
At the last hovering  
May signify that place

Iron in the soul,  
Spirit steeled in fire,  
Needle trembling on truth—  
These shall draw me there

The planets keep their course,  
Blindly the bee comes home,  
And I shall need no sextant  
To prove I'm getting warm.

Near that miraculous mountain  
Compass and clock must fail,  
For space stands on its head there  
And time chases its tail.

There's iron for the asking  
Will keep all winds at bay,  
Girders to take the leaden  
Strain of a sagging sky

Oh there's a mine of metal,  
Enough to make me rich  
And build right over chaos  
A cantilever bridge

*Cecil  
Day  
Lewis*

## THE MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN (21)

*Third Enemy speaks*

God is a proposition,  
And we that prove him are his priests, his chosen  
From bare hypothesis  
Of strata and wind, or stars and tides, watch me  
Construct his universe,  
A working model of my majestic notions,  
A sum done in the head  
Last week I measured the light, his little finger,  
The rest is a matter of time

God is an electrician,  
And they that worship him must worship him  
In ampere and in volt  
Scrap sun and moon, your twilight of false gods  
X is not here or there,  
Whose lightning scrawls brief cryptograms on sky,  
Easy for us to solve,  
Whose motions fit our formulæ, whose temple  
Is a pure apparatus

God is a statistician  
Offer him all the data, tell him your dreams  
What is your lucky number?  
How do you react to bombs? Have you a rival?  
Do you really love your wife?  
Get yourself taped Put soul upon the table  
Switch on the arc-lights, watch  
Heart's beat, the secret agents of the blood.  
Let every cell be observed

God is a Good Physician,  
Gives fruit for hygiene, crops for calories  
Don't touch that dirty man,  
Don't drink from the same cup, sleep in one bed.

*Cecil  
Day  
Lewis*

You know He would not like it  
Young men, cut out those visions, they're bad for  
the eyes  
I'll show you face to face  
Eugenics, Eupeptics and Euthanasia,  
The clinic Trinity

## THE MAGNETIC MOUNTAIN (24)

Tempt me no more, for I  
Have known the lightning's hour,  
The poet's inward pride,  
The certainty of power

Bayonets are closing round  
I shrink, yet I must wring  
A living from despair  
And out of steel a song

Though song, though breath be short,  
I'll share not the disgrace  
Of those that ran away  
Or never left the base

Comrades, my tongue can speak  
No comfortable words,  
Calls to a forlorn hope,  
Gives work and not rewards

Oh keep the sickle sharp  
And follow still the plough  
Others may reap, though some  
See not the winter through.

Father, who endest all,  
Pity our broken sleep,  
For we lie down with tears  
And waken but to weep

And if our blood alone  
Will melt this iron earth,  
Take it It is well spent  
Easing a saviour's birth.

FRANCIS MACNAMARA

Sea and Roses

Friend, am I silent? Know that here,  
'twixt gardened hill and the bay's soft wavelets,  
Here on this beach, this very sand  
and pebbles we crunch in heavy walking,

Once I was ambushed, guileless I!  
with Youth for a guide, by Love corrupted  
Love and his minion Golden Hair,  
who captive held me in strands well knotted!

Here—oh, now 'tis a score of years!—  
we sat, she and I, one summer twilight,  
Tossing maybe that pebble, or that,  
to break the wavelet in love with breaking!

' Why do they stop? ' we gaily asked,  
' retreat at the beach's first slope upward?  
Why not take the garden by storm?  
they're timid, as cold! love ordered levels!

' Ah, so on-coming! friends they seem,  
then shrink back, dreading an impropriety!  
Sea more false in its harmless will  
to calm, than yielding to lust of storm-winds! '

Gaily we boasted, ' Sure, no law  
were mighty enough to hold in limits—  
None to make constant were required!—  
a love we know of! so headlong-rushing,

' Burning . . . ' Ah! now where is that love?  
In brooding memory here it smoulders!  
Waves, are you mocking? Wait, I recall  
a something then in your tone, sarcastic!

Closing our ears, we kissed! and strove  
    of certainty still to feel more certain!  
What were you saying, cynics? Ah!  
    ‘They happen on figs just ripe for picking. . . .

*Francis  
Macnamara*

‘Love eternal? ha ha!’ you cracked,  
    in sudden resonant laughs collapsing,  
‘Yes!’ then hissed, ‘lived wholly, an hour  
    is—’ ah! your sigh of mock-rapture—‘ages!

‘To it, you lovers! redeem your vows  
    this evening, prove unwearying passion! ’  
Friend, believe me, she knows the trade,  
    this painted sterile maiden, the ocean!

See—and think how we saw and felt—  
    those frothy tongues up the sand come licking;  
Filling ears and eyes with the sweet  
    mad irritation of coming and going!

See them curving over to kiss,  
    exposing by chance their inmost beauties!  
Hear the short sharp gasp as they sink,  
    all spent with pleasure, clutching at pebbles!

Weakly they towsle bunches of weed,  
    while filling the air with winy odours:  
Steam of amorous sweat you inhale,  
    still fanned by breath from a cool horizon. . . .

Short the interval! comes a wave  
    ‘Again! ’ exhorting, ‘again! ’—you hear them . . .  
No? they are sighing sadly?—Friend!  
    were you a lady, and I more youthful,

*Francis Macnamara*      Bawdy you'd hear them! Yes, and ha!  
                                they still with the passers-by seek favour,  
Singing, grave now, a canting song  
                                for friends in mood to be reminiscent!

Ho! what touching appeals they make  
                                to memory, mind what pretty details!  
There her shoe, as she walked, came off . . .  
I tied it there      she'd a yellow garter!

Look, up there is the garden-seat  
                                where often we watched through those same tree-  
                                tops—

Palm and gum in a northern bay  
                                by hills embosomed—those sails now passing,

Watched their passage from branch to branch,  
                                and laughed to pretend the sail a squirrel!  
That's the villa, with fuchsia hedge  
                                Oh waves, enough of your sweet reminders!

Cawing of rooks, or village folk  
                                with tales of the dear old home, have touched me.  
Waves of Ocean are you! now cease  
                                this maudlin ballad, you proved impostors!

Sigh with me, do you? break your hearts  
                                for yesterday? Oh! eternal breakers . . .  
Pious turned, you moralise too  
                                on beauty of love's re-birth celestial!

Memory's monk, I'm still to haunt  
                                this haunted beach, and rooms of the villa,  
Sole, I'm to seek my thorny rose,  
                                return to her only where she's absent!

Honeyed times with a ghost I'll have,  
still hearing, even behind closed windows,  
Strident whispers up from the sea,  
to warn me—intellectual fal-lals!

*Francis  
Macnamara*

Ah! now Friend, you mock me in turn!  
Pursue that maiden ahead there, should I?  
Walking alone, you say, she seeks  
this day's (or at least this evening's) pleasure!

Trim young body . . . Oh, see the flick  
her cane gave, sending that sea-grass flying!  
What's she dreaming or scheming, eh?  
and what to *her* are the wild waves saying?

Might be amusing              Bah! just see  
the mincing gait of her, meant to ravish . . .  
There! and the soulful gaze genteel  
around at the hills—by chance behind us!

Foam-sprung Venus? Suburban foam!  
and—well, there's no knowing. . . . Oh, but truly!  
Waves of the one same sea that laves  
the Cyprian shore, you might do better!

Hear them sniggering now : ' Two men  
in company . . . high-bred talk fastidious!  
Ha! if one should return this way  
alone, we'd see—we have often seen it! '

Well, and doesn't the local nymph—  
what more is Venus in high Olympus?—  
Please, with limited charm, but will  
more pious. . . . Friend, I've a mind to leave  
you—

*Francis Macnamara* Just to out-face those wet guffaws!—  
and follow her, ha! be snared eyes open  
Shocked? you had thought this holy ground,  
with memory stirring Yes! to ventures!

Faithful I as the sailor! taught  
(as he) by the wavelets deeply knowing  
Sailor keeping an edge on love  
by crossing its blade with new attractions!

Pleasure of sense! there love's most true  
to memory Ah, this beach that evening!  
Infidelity best keeps faith!  
not monkish hoarding of Ah, that evening!

Minx ahead there, can you again  
(I challenge you) sow this beach with roses?  
Come! what then was lust of the eye  
but earlier joys remembered swiftly?

Pleasure prepared that pleasure, yes!  
when all I had loved in hills and gardens—  
Oh, and most (I own) in the sea!—  
I saw in her person here embodied . . .

Roses of Eden, gold more fine  
than Ophir But what's for us the moral?  
Ah, the present! live in the flash  
of no duration . . . memento mori!

Loves that invite to anchor, ho!  
we'll raid them, and make the sea our harbour!  
This, oh good, oh wise little waves,  
we'll take as your drift,—so make love deathless!

Come! lest even I fix this faith,  
in wine we'll forget it, Friend, and keep it!  
Death we'll toast, and the present hour  
that trembles between his threats and triumphs!

*Francis  
Macnamara*



CHARLES MADGE

The Times  
On Apprehending  
Birdseye

## THE TIMES

Time wasted and time spent  
Daytime with used up wit  
Time to stand, time to sit  
Or wait and see if it  
Happens, happy event

For war is eating now

Waking, shaking off death  
Leaving the white sheets  
And dull head who repeats  
The dream of his defeats  
And drawing colder breath

For war is eating now.

Growing older, going  
Where the water runs  
Black as death, and guns  
Explode the sinking suns  
Blowing like hell, snowing

For war is eating now.

## ON APPREHENDING

*Charles  
Madge*

Master to me fly turning clouds to walls  
approaching steep to life if that is square

The hold on me of the held-onto hand  
shows where bone lies, and if I ever knew  
the touched quick once, big now is here instead

Given this morning not more true or untrue  
than the known inspiration of air  
something which is muscular to have said  
a rock or wingbrace to understand  
between standing room and space that falls.

The step on step of incident is where  
is the heard voice of blood that calls and calls

Each echoed minute is its other too  
and each round clasp of things face is and head  
of body risen from unseen now sand.

## BIRDSEYE

In the city without classes, white  
Stand block on block houses, bare  
And the trees wave their heads, light  
Throws down its challenge, everywhere  
Singing heard in the city, joy  
Runs on athletic feet, free  
The playgrounds, beautiful children, boy  
And girl run over the grass, see  
Clothes cast off, man appears, plain  
The strength under poverty, play  
Echoes in happy dialect, brain  
And muscles are building this all day

We from our aeroplane gaze, high  
In air from where white clouds roll, stare  
For a moment lost in wonder, by  
The white city amazed, dare  
We join the chorus that laughs up? how  
In unison that song singing, pass  
Out of our rags, our badness? now  
We fly in shadow on the grass

CHARLOTTE MEW

Fin de Fête

The Rambling Sailor

Domus Caedet Arborem

Facsimile of  
the poem by  
Charlotte Mew  
as copied in pencil  
by Thomas Hardy  
(see page x)

Fair de Fête -  
by Charlotte Mew -

Sweetheart, for such a day  
One mustn't grudge no score;  
Here, then, it's all to pay:  
It's good-night at the door.  
  
(Good-night; & good dreams to you.) —  
Do you remember the picture-book there's  
We left two children sleeping in a wood? No longer fit through,  
And how the birds came down & covered them with leaves?

So you & I should have slept, — But none.  
Oh, what a lonely bed!  
With just the shadow of a waving bough  
In the moonlight over your bed.

## FIN DE FÊTE

*Charlotte  
Mew*

Sweetheart, for such a day

One mustn't grudge the score,  
Here, then, it's all to pay,  
It's Good-night at the door

Good-night and good dreams to you,—

Do you remember the picture-book thieves  
Who left two children sleeping in a wood the long night  
through,  
And how the birds came down and covered them  
with leaves?

So you and I should have slept,—But now,

Oh, what a lonely head!  
With just the shadow of a waving bough  
In the moonlight over your bed

## THE RAMBLING SAILOR

In the old back streets o' Pimlico,  
On the docks at Monte Video,  
At the Ring o' Bells on Plymouth Hoe  
He'm arter me now wheerever I go  
An' dirty nights when the wind do blow  
I can hear him sing-songin' up from sea  
Oh! no man nor woman's bin friend to me  
An' to-day I'm feared wheer to-morrow I'll be,  
Sin' the night the moon lay whist and white  
On the road goin' down to the Lizard Light  
When I heard him hummin' behind me

' Oh! look, boy, look in your sweetheart's eyes  
So deep as sea an' so blue as skies,  
An' 'tis better to kiss than to chide her  
If they tell 'ee no tales, they'll tell 'ee no lies  
Of the little brown mouse  
That creeps into the house  
To lie sleepin' so quiet beside her

' Oh! hold 'ee long, but hold 'ee light  
Your true mate's hand when you find him,  
He'll help 'ee home on a darksome night  
Wi' a somethin' bright  
That he'm holdin' tight  
In the hand that he keeps behind him.

' Oh! sit 'ee down to your whack o' pies,  
So hot's the stew and the brew likewise,  
But whiles you'm scrapin' the plates and dishes,  
A'gakin' down in the shiversome sea  
For the delicate mussels inside o' we  
Theer's a passel o' hungry fishes'

At the *Halte des Marins* at *Saint Nazaire*  
I cussed him, sittin' astride his chair,  
An' Christmas Eve on the Mary Clare  
I pitched him a'down the hatch-way stair  
But 'Shoutin' and cloutin's nothing to me,  
Nor the hop nor the skip nor the jump,' says he,  
'For I be walkin' on every quay—'

*Charlotte  
Mew*

*'So look, boy, look in the dear maid's eyes  
And take the true man's hand  
And eat your fill o' your whack o' pies  
Till you'm starin' up wheer the sea-crow flies  
Wi' your head lynn' soft in the sand'*

*Charlotte  
Mew*

DOMUS CAEDET ARBOREM

Ever since the great planes were murdered at the end of  
the gardens  
The city, to me, at night has the look of a Spirit brooding  
crime,  
As if the dark houses watching the trees from dark  
windows  
Were simply biding their time

SUSAN MILES  
Death's Pale Play-thing  
Scales

## DEATH'S PALE PLAY-THING

Propped on pillows,  
Huddled and chill,  
Death's pale play-thing  
Prattles still,

Death's pale play-thing  
Unaware  
Whose the sweat-beads  
That thrid his hair,

Whose the birthday  
Candles burning  
In the rings where his blind bright  
Eyes are turning,

Whose fantastic  
Fingers fleck  
Red and white  
On lip and cheek,

(With foam and blood  
On cheek and lip  
Painting the puppet's  
Last make-up )

Blind to Life's baubles,  
Deaf to Death's rattle,  
Death's pale play-thing  
Has ceased to prattle.

## SCALES

*Susan  
Miles*

The pale claw that was once a child's pink-fleshed hand  
Trembles, desirous  
Not a father's,  
Not a mother's  
Grasp can satisfy  
A trained nurse with detached aplomb holds out toys,  
This one?  
Or that one?  
Not the first one, not the second, but the third  
Is grasped  
And now the fragile fingers that will soon be fragile  
bones  
Rattle gleefully a pair of tin scales,  
Weighing in the balance—till a last haemorrhage spurtles—  
Neither good and evil,  
Love and duty,  
Nor yet life and death,  
But haporths of shining rice,  
Pennorths of rich brown chicory,  
And two sugar biscuits



HAROLD MONRO

Bitter Sanctuary

The Garden

I

She lives in the porter's room, the plush is nicotined  
Clients have left their photos there to perish  
She watches through green shutters those who press  
To reach unconsciousness  
She licks her varnished thin magenta lips,  
She picks her foretooth with a finger nail,  
She pokes her head out to greet new clients, or  
To leave them (to what torture) waiting at the door.

II

Heat has locked the heavy earth,  
Given strength to every sound,  
He, where his life still holds him to the ground,  
In anæsthesia, groaning for re-birth,  
Leans at the door  
From out the house there comes the dullest flutter,  
A lackey, and thin giggling from behind that shutter.

III

His lost eyes lean to find and read the number.  
Follows his knuckled rap, and hesitating curse.  
He cannot wake himself, he may not slumber,  
While on the long white wall across the road  
Drives the thin outline of a dwindling hearse.

IV

Now the door opens wide.

He ' Is there room inside? '  
She. ' Are you past the bounds of pain? '  
He ' May my body lie in vain  
Among the dreams I cannot keep! '  
She ' Let him drink the cup of sleep '

Thin arms and ghostly hands, faint sky-blue eyes,  
 Long drooping lashes, lids like full-blown moons,  
 Clinging to any brink of floating skies  
 What hope is there? What fear?—Unless to wake and see  
 Lingered flesh, or cold eternity

O yet some face, half living, brings  
 Far gaze to him and croons

She ' You're white You are alone  
     Can you not approach my sphere? '  
 He ' I'm changing into stone '  
 She ' Would I were! Would I were! '

Then the white attendants fill the cup

In the morning through the world,  
 Watch the flunkeys bring the coffee,  
 Watch the shepherds on the downs,  
 Lords and ladies at their toilet,  
 Farmers, merchants, frothing towns

But look how he, unfortunate, now fumbles  
 Through unknown chambers, unheedful stumbles  
 Can he evade the overshadowing night?  
 Are there not somewhere chinks of braided light?

How do they leave who once are in those rooms?  
 Some may be found, they say, deeply asleep  
 In ruined tombs  
 Some in white beds, with faces round them. Some  
 Wander the world, and never find a home.

## THE GARDEN

He told me he had seen a ruined garden  
Outside the town  
‘Where? Where?’  
I asked him quickly  
He said it lay toward the southern country,  
He knew the road well he would take me there  
Then he sat down and talked  
About that garden  
He was so grandly proud and sure of it,  
I listened all the evening to his talk  
And our glasses were emptied,  
Talking of it  
We filled them and filled them again,  
Talking of it  
He said that no one knew  
The garden but himself,  
Though hundreds passed it day by day,  
Yet no one knew it but himself

### I

The garden, it was long and wide  
And filled with great unconscious peace,  
All the old trees were tall and large,  
And all the birds—

The birds, he said, were like a choir  
Of lively boys,  
Who never went to school,  
But sang instead

He told me of the trailing flowers  
Hung on the ruined walls,  
The rivers and their waterfalls,  
The hidden woods, the lawns, the bowers.

Small cool plantations, palm and vine,  
With fig-tree growing by their side,  
And violet and maidenhair  
And

*Harold  
Monro*

II

we were late in conversation  
Talking of that most wonderful garden,  
And filled our glasses again and again  
Talking about that beautiful garden,  
Until he vowed in the middle of drink  
To lead me to-morrow to see it myself  
We closed our hands on the pact  
He vanished away through the dark

III

To-morrow, to-morrow, we start our walk  
To-morrow is here and he meets me surely  
Out from the city we go and pursue  
Mile after mile of the open road,  
Come to a place of sudden trees,  
Pass it across the fields, then on  
By farmyards, through villages, over the downs.  
Mile after mile we walk He is pleased  
Our feet become heavy with dust, and we laugh,  
And we talk all the while of our future delight

IV

He came upon the garden in the dusk,  
He leaned against the wall  
He pointed out its beauties in the gloom  
We lay down weary in the shadow of elms,  
And stared between their branches at the moon,  
And talked about to-morrow and the garden.  
I knew that everything he said was true,  
For we were resting up against the wall

Oh hard awakening from a dream  
I thought I was in paradise  
He cooked the coffee we had brought,  
Then looked about him

We had not reached the wall, he found  
It was a little farther on  
We walked another mile or two,  
And stood before the ruined gate

He was not satisfied at all  
He said the entrance was not here  
I hardly understood his talk,  
And so I watched him move about  
Indeed, it was the garden he had meant,  
But not the one he had described

Then suddenly from out his conversation  
I saw it in the light of his own thought  
A phantom Eden shining  
Placid among his dreams

And he, with large eyes and with hands uplifted,  
Cried 'Look, O look!' Indeed I saw the garden,  
The ghostly palm and violet,  
Fig, maidenhair, and fountain,

The rivers and their flowered lawns, the gleaming  
Birds, and their song—I heard that clear I know  
And silent, in amazement,  
We stared

Then both sat down beneath the wall and rested  
And in our conversation  
Lived in the garden

'We'll come again next week,' he said at last  
 ' We have no leisure to explore it now,  
 Besides we cannot climb this crumbling wall  
 Our gate is on the farther side, I know  
 We'd have to go right round, and even then  
 I am not sure it's open till the spring  
 I have affairs in town If you don't mind,  
 We will go back directly After all,  
 The garden cannot run away, or change  
 Next week I'll have more time, and, once inside,  
 Who knows Who knows? How very curious  
 too,

Hundreds of people pass it day by day  
 Along that high road over there, the cars—  
 Look at them! And the railway too! Well Well,  
 I'm glad that no one cares for Eden now  
 It would be spoilt so quickly We'll go back  
 By train, if you don't mind I've walked enough  
 Look, there's the station Eh? '

I did not see that man again  
 Until a year had gone or more  
 I had not found him anywhere,  
 And many times had gone to seek  
 The garden, but it was not there

One day along the country road  
 There was he coming all alone  
 He would have passed me with a stare  
 I held his arm, but he was cold,  
 And rudely asked me my affair  
 I said, there was a garden, I'd been told . . .

Then suddenly came that rapture upon us,  
We saw the garden again in our mutual thought:  
Blue and yellow and green,  
Shining by day or by night

‘Those are the trees,’ he said, ‘and there is the  
gateway  
To-day, I think, it is open And shall we not go  
there?’  
Quickly we ran in our joy,  
Quickly—then stopped, and stared

x

An angel with a flaming sword  
Stood large, and beautiful, and clear:  
He covered up his golden eyes,  
And would not look as we came near

Birds wheeled about the flowery gate,  
But we could never see inside,  
Although (I often think) it stood  
Slack on its hinges open wide

The angel dropped his hopeless sword,  
And stood with his great pinions furled,  
And wept into his hands but we  
Feared, and turned back to our own world

EDWIN MUIR

The Riders

*Edwin  
Muir*

## THE RIDERS

At the dead centre of the boundless plain  
Does our way end? Our horses pace and pace  
Like steeds forever labouring on a shield,  
Keeping their solitary heraldic courses

Our horses move on such a ground, for them  
Perhaps the progress is all ease and pleasure,  
But it is heavy work for us, the riders,  
Whose hearts have flown so far ahead, they are lost

Long past all finding  
While we sit staring at the same horizon

ne has such stagnant stretches, we are told,  
l generation after generation  
travel them, sad stationary journey,  
hat device, what meaning?

Yet these coursers  
seen all and will see all Suppliantly  
ocks will melt, the sealed horizons fall  
e their onset—and the places  
hearts have hid in will be viewed by strangers  
g where we are, breathing the foreign air  
e new realm they have inherited

e shall fall here on the plain

It may be  
steeds would stumble, and the long road end,  
gend says) if they should lack their riders  
ut then a rider  
ays easy to find Yet we fill a saddle  
st We sit where others have sat before us,  
others will sit after us

It cannot be

These animals know their riders, mark the change  
When one makes way for another It cannot be  
They know this wintry wilderness from spring  
For they have come from places dreadful past  
All knowledge They have borne upon their saddles  
Forms fiercer than the tiger, borne them calmly  
As they bear us now

*Edwin  
Muir*

And so we do not hope  
That their great coal-black glossy hides  
Should keep a glimmer of the autumn light  
We still remember, when our limbs were weightless  
As red leaves on a tree, and our silvery breaths  
Went on before us like new risen souls  
Leading our empty bodies through the air  
A princely dream Now all that golden country  
Is rased as bare as Troy We cannot return,  
And shall not see the kingdom of our heirs

These steeds are mortal, and we who fall so lightly,  
Fall so heavily, are, it is said, immortal  
Such knowledge should armour us against all change,  
And this monotony Yet these worn saddles  
Have powers to lull us to obliviousness  
They were appointed for us, and the scent of the ancient  
leather  
Is strong as a spell So we must mourn or rejoice  
For this our seat, our station, our inheritance,  
As if it were all

So we dream on

This is our kingdom



FRANK O'CONNOR

Three Old Brothers

### THREE OLD BROTHERS

While some goes dancing reels and some  
Goes stuttering love in ditches  
The three old brothers rise from bed  
And moan, and pin their breeches,  
And one says 'I can sleep no more,  
I'd liefer far go weeping  
That honest men must lie awake  
Since brats can spoil their sleeping,'  
And Blind Tom says that's eighty years  
'If I was ten years younger  
I'd take my stick and welt their rumps  
And gall their gamest runner!'  
Then James the youngest cries 'Praise God  
We have outlived our passion!'  
And by their fire of roots all three  
Praise God after a fashion

Says James 'I loved when I was young  
A lass of one and twenty  
That had the grace of all the queens  
And broke men's hearts in plenty,  
But now the girl's a gammy crone  
With no soft sides or boosom,  
And all the ones she kist abed  
Where the fat maggot chews 'em,  
And though she had no kiss for me  
And though myself is older,  
And though my thighs are cold to-night  
Their thighs I think are colder'

And Blind Tom says 'I knew a man  
A girl refused for lover  
Worked in America forty years  
And heaped copper on copper,

And came back all across the foam  
Dressed in his silks and satins  
And watched for her from dawn to dark  
    And from Compline to Matins,  
And when she passed him in her shawl  
    He burst his sides with laughing,  
And went back happy to the west,  
    And heeded no man's scoffing,  
And, Christ,' moans Tom, ' if I'd his luck  
    I'd not mind cold nor coughing ! '

*Frank  
O'Connor*

Then Patcheen says ' My lot's a lot  
    All men on earth might envy  
That saw the girl I could not get  
    Nurse an untimely baby '

And all three say ' Dear heart! Dear heart! '  
    And James the youngest mutters  
' Praise God we have outlived our griefs  
    And not fell foul like others,  
Like Paris and the Grecian chiefs  
    And the three Ulster brothers! '



RUTH PITTER

Portrait of a Gentleman

Digdog

## PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN

*(In business for himself in a small way, and not doing too well,  
owing to trade depression and want of low qualities)*

At the spraygun stands large heroic Ted  
The screech of air, the thunder of the fan  
Beat in huge billows of din about his head,  
But can affect no feature of the Man,  
Who thinks, This blasted stuff does go on thin—  
But looks     this is your cue, I think, Miss Muse,  
Mount the compressed-air cylinder, and begin.  
She from that vibrant rostrum frankly views  
The face, the attitude, the matchless thews,  
She from all little loves and passions free—  
And opens thus O godlike Ted! I see  
  
On thy great breast the brazen harness glow,  
On thy great shins behold the shining greaves,  
Above thy countenance see the red plume blow,  
The helm invisible, the sacred leaves  
Captain of all lost causes, and the head  
Of fallen enterprise, I see thee stand  
Like Alexander summoning his dead  
Warriors about him in the spectral land  
Ah, should times mend, my Edward! thou would'st fall  
To sad vulgarity a sudden prey—  
I see the Residence, the Car, and all  
Thy wife's long dreams come true in dread array!  
But ere the moment passes, let me say.  
  
Ted in hard times is beautiful, he seems  
Like Agamemnon, like the bird of Jove,  
Like the great golden navy of my dreams  
Manned by dear virtue and unbent by love,  
Trampling down briny trouble O that straight  
We might beyond the raging of our fate  
Cast anchor in the unimagined streams!

## DIGDOG

Ruth  
Pitter

Rooting in packingcase of dirty straw, hurling  
lumps of it overboard moaning desire  
moaning desire of vermin lovely rat  
ineffable mouse attar of felicity  
BUT there is nothing  
nothing but dirt and darkness  
but strawdirt chaffdust smellillusion alas  
BRAVE CHIEN ANGLAIS  
NOBLE RENARDEARTH  
DIGDOG

Alas I also  
root in earth desiring  
something for nothing digging down to peace  
follow the mole and not the lark  
bet with the bloke who knows  
peace lies there whence from the dark  
arise the lily and the rose  
peace rains down in rivers of gold  
and there great nuggets of sleep  
wait for the seeker—ever been sold  
sit on your tail and weep  
for there is nothing but dirt and darkness  
but strawdirt chaffdust smellillusion ALAS  
LACHE ESPRIT ANGLAIS  
POLTRON DE RENARDEARTH  
DIGDOG.



WILLIAM PLOMER

Before the Storm

Dragon-fly Love

The Death of a Snake

## BEFORE THE STORM

Over dry dunes the driven sand before the storm  
In cone-shaped funnels spins and rises  
Like a spirit taking form,  
Vain to call the boatman! The sound of his replies is  
Dashed from human ears like a cup from desert lips  
And rapidly the boat whirls out toward the rocking  
ships,  
What a tiny arm he waves, so swiftly the perspective  
slips!

Tranquil here in winter dove-grey cranes  
Stand in brackish pools and preen their plumage  
And forget the summer rains,  
But thunderclouds in torment now above the blue ridge  
Are overspreading fanwise outwards from the grass-  
green inland plains

A naked negro on a windblown horse  
Prancing with elastic silence in the tempest-roar  
Leaves a seaward dust-drift swerving from his course  
And turns the trotting cattle inward from the shore  
At last, like lust delayed or sorrow following remorse,  
Released, the pent-up elemental outburst bleeds—  
Sudden, with a patterning of heavy drops among the  
straining reeds

## DRAGON-FLY LOVE

*William  
Plomer*

Plated with light I float a thousand-eyed,  
On rustling wings of veiny talc to fly,  
To kiss in flight the image of my pride  
That skims the deep reflection of the sky,  
Where finny shoals in shadowy grace repose  
Insects that perish with a tiny cry  
Provide the speed with which my body goes  
In scaly splendour quadruplaning by

Giddy with hope I seize my love at noon,  
On tremulous wave of fiery air we run,  
Long locked in love, across the red lagoon,  
Blazing delirious while we whirl as one—  
Diamonds melting underneath the moon,  
Planets in union going round the sun

*William  
Plomer*

## THE DEATH OF A SNAKE

*'Death and generations are both mysteries of nature, and somewhat resemble each other'* MARCUS AURELIUS

Bruised by a heel he strove to die,  
In frantic spirals bored the air,  
Turned his pale belly upward to the sky  
In coitus with death and here and there  
Scored in the dust quick ideographs of pain—  
These, that the wind removed, in memory remain

JOHN PUDNEY

The Thames Near Its Source  
Crossing

## THE THAMES NEAR ITS SOURCE

Here at original source, in water meadows  
here I have retreated, am pacing it to and fro,  
testing a tendon, trying a muscle's ease,  
watching the Thames, its quickening silver division,  
knowing its flowing, paces, swift approaches,  
and bridges, whirlpools, arches and hesitations,  
how it will become tidal

Now it is April, metal the skies, taut over, steep above  
awakened orchards, cornlands  
Branches, the bearing wood pointing all pointing growth,  
bending in sapling strength  
braced with the wind's strict tension  
And the roan mare, her fullness anxious now,  
is pacing careful, wary of her foaling

Now it is plain, here avenues, ways begin,  
April to June, river to tidal basin,  
this summer's crop and new stock on the farm  
This is where I, abashed to hesitate,  
in eagerness must pause, and O my love,  
certain that I must gather strength, with you  
tidal become, the traffic way for ships

## CROSSING

*John  
Pudney*

Starting at night

I watched a crane and tackle,  
the burden of ship's muffled cargo loaded  
the group ashore, the group upon the ship,  
shouts and curt understanding  
lip to lip

Waiting, apart,

I loaded another burden,  
heard the impatient siren in my heart  
created, knew the purpose of it harden



PETER QUENNELL

The Divers  
Leviathan (1)

## THE DIVERS

Ah, look,  
How sucking their last sweetness from the air  
These divers run upon the pale sea verge,  
An evening air so smooth my hand could round  
And grope a circle of the hollow sky  
Without a harshness or impediment.

Look now,  
How they run cowering and each unknots  
A rag, a girdle twisted on his loins,  
Stands naked, quivered in the cool of night

As boldest lovers will tire presently,  
When dawn dries up a radiance on the limbs,  
And lapse to common sleep,  
To the deep tumult of habitual dreams,  
Each sighing, with loosened limbs, as if regrettfully,  
Gives up his body to the foamless surge

Water combs out his body, and he sinks  
Beyond all form and sound  
Only the blood frets on,  
Grown fearful, in a shallow dissonance.

Water strains on his hair and drums upon his flank,  
Consumes his curious track  
And straight or sinuous path  
Dissolves as swift, impermanent as light.

Still his strange purpose drives him, like a beam,  
Like the suspended shaft of cavern-piercing sun,  
And, hardier still,  
With wavering hands divides the massive gloom,—

A vast caress through which he penetrates,  
Or obscure death withdrawing  
Veil upon veil,  
Discovering new darkness and profounder terror

Peter  
Quennell

' Consider you your loss,  
For now what strength of foot or hand  
Can take you by the narrow way you came  
Through the clear darkness up again and up  
Watch a procession of the living days,  
Where dawn and evening melt so soft together  
As wine in water, or milk shed in water,  
Filming and clouding into even dullness '

' Who weeps me now with pulse of noisy tears,  
Who strikes the breast?  
If I regret among the flowing weed,  
My regret is  
Not vocal, cannot pierce to hidden day,  
Momentary, soon quenched, like a strangled flame '

## LEVIATHAN (1)

Leviathan drives the eyed prow of his face,  
With the surge dumbly rippling round his lips,  
Toward the Atlantid shore,  
Not flat and golden like the Cherubim,  
Or a face round and womanish like the Seraphim,  
But thick and barbed—the broad, barbed cheeks of  
Donne

Beneath he stretched his hands to the sea forests,  
Obscure and thick, with the cool freshes under,  
Lifts his surprised brows to the sky's milky light,  
New come from the abyss.

While a faint radiance, webbed from the waves' substance,  
Clung to his changing limbs and his coiled body,  
Reddening, making them darker than the sea,  
Or half translucent

And when the mouths of Atlantean brooks  
Struck on his mouth with taste of sudden cold  
And wound his shoulders like embracing hands,  
He put out both thick palms and felt the shallows.

The salt had scurfed his body with white fire  
And knotted the rough hair between his breasts,  
And as he rose delicate Atlantis trembled,  
Tilting upon the sea's plain like a leaf.

The passionless air hung heavy on Atlantis,  
And the inclined spears of the flowering bushes  
Smoothly dropped down their loosened, threaded petals,  
Softening the pathways.

For tideless night had covered her, and sealed  
All scent within the narrow throat of flowers,  
And sound within the navel of the hills,  
And stars in the confusion of the air.

Peter  
Quennell

Within her darkness and unconsciousness  
She hid all beauty, and her silences  
Sound's measurers and sequences,  
And the black earth quickened  
With oppression of blossom

Ah, thief that swims by night—Leviathan,  
Rolled blindly in the wave's trough like a rotting thing,  
Come to Atlantis' further edge by dark,  
Poised over her quietness,

Measureless drunkard of the bitter sea,  
Insatiate, like some slow stain  
Creeping on pleasure's face,  
Like sudden misery

So foul, so desolate,  
That you are crept to seek new life,  
Have crossed the water's plain,  
Desiring and by stealth to gain  
For rankness, foolishness and half-conceivéd beauty  
Some perfect shape—an Atlantean body



HERBERT READ  
Tourists in a Sacred Place  
Device  
Logos  
A Short Poem for Armistice Day  
Mutations of the Phœnix (1) and (8)

## TOURISTS IN A SACRED PLACE

A pallid rout stepping like phantoms  
beneath the arching boughs,  
have come with angel hands and wretched voices  
to the valley and this choir of perished stones

Valid was my anguish—as though a turbulent dove  
had scattered the leafy silence  
Now in airless vistas, dim and blind my limbs will loiter  
while the senses stray to vast defeats

A rocking bell  
peals in a grey tower  
The sound has broken down the strong defences  
of age and innocence

Cecily come with your virginal tremors  
Cecily still the bell  
Your tresses are wet from the rushing river  
a green weed clings like a vein on your breast

Cecily, listen, the clangour is over  
now only the burden of bees in the clover  
God and his angels have give you grace,  
and stamped your mission on your naïad face.

## DEVICE

*Herbert  
Read*

O that I might believe that time  
Is but a measure thrown on things  
That hold existence in a sphere  
Intense alone, and always felt  
In full reality! For then  
I could evade despondency  
By magnifying to my frame  
The ecstatic beat that night and day  
Pulses within the milk white walls  
Of mental sloth, eager to break  
Into the radiant release  
Of vision divine and precise

—Time that is a shrouded thought  
Involving earth and life in doubt.

Suddenly he began to torture the flowers  
began to twist red winter tulips  
faced by the behemothian jaws  
for which there is no inevitable IN and OUT

The carnage at the Theban gate  
the startled blackcock's raucous cry  
the Morse code of a boot and crutch  
filled the space between river and sky

But stay! the light is cancelled there  
the dark eyes cease  
to stare at suns  
and light breaks in behind the brain.

## A SHORT POEM FOR ARMISTICE DAY

*Herbert  
Read*

Gather or take fierce degree  
trim the lamp set out for sea  
here we are at the workman's entrance  
clock in and shed your eminence

Notwithstanding, work it diverse ways  
work it diverse days, multiplying four digestions  
here we make artificial flowers  
of paper, tin, and metal thread

One eye one leg one arm one lung  
a syncopated sick heart beat  
the record is not nearly worn  
that weaves a background to our work

I have no power, therefore have patience  
These flowers have no sweet scent  
no lustre in the petal no increase  
from fertilising flies, and bees

No seed they have no seed  
their tendrils are of wire and grip  
the buttonhole the lip  
and never fade

And will not fade though life  
and lustre go in genuine flowers  
and men like flowers are cut  
and withered on a stem

And will not fade a year or more  
I stuck one in a candlestick  
and there it clings about the socket  
I have no power, therefore have patience

MUTATIONS OF THE PHœNIX  
(1)

*Beauty, truth and rarity,  
Grace in all simplicity,  
Here enclosed in cinders lie*

We have rested our limbs  
    in some forsaken cover  
where wide black horns of rock  
Weigh on the subdued waters  
    the waters  
                menaced to quiet

Our limbs  
    settle into the crumbling sand  
There will be our impress here  
    until the flowing tide  
                erases  
all designs the fretful day leaves here

The blood burns in our limbs with an even flame.  
The same sundering flame  
    has burnt the world and left these crumbling sands  
The one flame  
    burns many phenomena.

The limbs  
    have their arcadian lethargy  
holding the included flame  
    to a temporal submission

The flame  
    burns all  
    uses  
the ducts and chambers of our tunnelled flesh  
    to focus flame  
                to its innate intensity.

Flame

is a whirl of atoms

At one moment a whorl of what is seen—  
a shell

Herbert  
Read

A shell

convoluted through time—  
endless and beginningless time.

(8)

This is the holy phoenix time  
The sun is sunken in a deep abyss  
and her dying life transpires

Each bar and boss  
of rallied cloud the fire receives

Till the ashen sky dissolves

The mind seeks ease  
now that the moon has risen  
and the world itself is full of ease.

The embers of the world  
settle with a sigh, a bird's wing, a leaf  
There is a faint glow of embers  
in the ashen sky.

These stars  
are your final ecstasy,  
and the moon now risen  
golden, easeful.

The hills creep in mistily—  
    the tide now a distant sigh—  
like hounds outstretched  
they guard the included peace—  
    the tide a muted ecstasy

The river carries in its slaty bed  
    an echo from the sea  
But we leave  
    even the river is lost.

No sound now  
No colour, all black a cave

In the cavern's mouth  
the moon is hidden

Yet still the stars—  
intense remnants of time.

O phœnix,  
O merciful bird of fire,  
Extinguish your white  
hungry flames

MICHAEL ROBERTS

Poem 147

Black Funnel Spouting Black  
On Reading Some Neglected Poets

Scatter grey ash to the darkness, break  
The jar, the brittle urn, to the bleak  
Inhuman north, and the dark wind

Crumble the trivial husk, the shell,  
And claim, O firm substantial Earth,  
The living pulse and the quick sap  
From the green shoot and cunning skull

Take it, and take the unsullied lake,  
The song, the unconquered hill, the alert  
Touch, and the glance, and a man's strength—

Take it, you can but take it once—  
Pride of young earth and living limb,  
The gentian hour and the sun's light

Take Calcine the amorphous dust,  
Destroy the inert substratum, break  
Too late, the pattern dust attains,  
Quicker than tardy death, the shining dark—

Beethoven deaf and Milton blind,  
Melville forsaken of the valiant mind,  
Beyond the inhuman pattern, men,  
Broken, ephemeral, undismayed

## BLACK FUNNEL SPOUTING BLACK

*Michael  
Roberts*

Leap out of the wild terror of the pines, O still-white hart!  
Clatter your silver hooves to starbright glittering on  
flint,

Be momentary magic, heart's delight,  
Your motion is a music, link to link

And I have come upon this place  
By the insistent thundering  
Of melancholy streets, the wrack  
Wrack of a broken mind  
I have been long in coming, slow to move,  
I have been shabbiness, but I kept  
Quick, quick the clear eye  
The heart's song and the sharp cry—

Have you not heard the salutation yet  
Down by the docks, beneath a flickering jet,  
Nor heard penumbral voices call  
From wet blind alleys? Past them all  
Grind inefficient winches, cables, chains,  
Rattling over capstans, stresses, strains,  
Grate harsh and rusty music, and in shrieks  
Fouling ripped air a clamouring dredger creaks,  
Snarling, subsides; and one grim monolith,  
Black funnel spouting black, white siren steam,  
Moves by the sweat of men, swings out midstream,  
Yells down the river, booms and by  
Thin mist and oily waste, lantern-light,  
Rides to the open sea and the waves' white  
Following foam as one swung derrick groans and with  
Unanswerable logic threads the sky.

## ON READING SOME NEGLECTED POETS

This is a long road in a dubious mist,  
Not with a groan nor any heard complaint  
We march, uncomprehending, not expecting Time  
To show us beacons

When we have struggled on a little farther  
This madness will yield of itself,  
There will not be any singing or sudden joy,  
But a load will be set down

And maybe no one will ever come,  
No other traveller passing that way,  
Therefore the load we lifted will be left,  
A milestone, insignificant

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

*From The Heart's Journey*

*Siegfried  
Sassoon*

*From THE HEART'S JOURNEY*

(1)

As I was walking in the gardens where  
Spring touched the glooms with green, stole over me  
A sense of wakening leaves that filled the air  
With boding of Elysian days to be.

Cold was the music of the birds, and cold  
The sunlight, shadowless with misty gold  
It seemed I stood with Youth on the calm verge  
Of some annunciation that should bring  
With flocks of silver angels, ultimate Spring  
Whence all that life had longed for might emerge

*From THE HEART'S JOURNEY*  
(2)

*Siegfried  
Sassoon*

You were glad to-night and now you've gone away  
Flushed in the dark you put your dreams to bed,  
But as you fall asleep I hear you say  
Those tired sweet drowsy words we left unsaid

Sleep well for I can follow you to bless  
And lull your distant beauty where you roam;  
And with wild songs of hoarded loveliness  
Recall you to these arms that were your home

'*When I'm alone*'—the words tripped off his tongue  
As though to be alone were nothing strange  
'*When I was young*,' he said, '*when I was young* . . .

I thought of age, and loneliness, and change  
I thought how strange we grow when we're alone,  
And how unlike the selves that meet, and talk,  
And blow the candles out, and say good-night  
*Alone*. . . . The word is life endured and known.  
It is the stillness where our spirits walk  
And all but inmost faith is overthrown

GEOFFREY SCOTT

What was Solomon's Mind?

Not I

The Golden Spider in the Mind

To W H Davies

The Weathercock on the Moor

## WHAT WAS SOLOMON'S MIND?

What was Solomon's mind?  
If he was wise in truth,  
'Twas something hard to find  
And delicate a mouse  
Tingling, and small, and smooth,  
Hid in vast haunted house.

By smallness quite beset—  
Stillest when most alive—  
Shrinking to smaller yet  
And livelier, until,  
Gladly diminutive,  
Still smoother, and more still,

He centres to an Eye,  
A clean expectancy,  
That, from the narrow black  
Safe velvet of his crack,  
Quivering, quiet, dumb,  
Drinks up the lighted room

## NOT I

*Geoffrey  
Scott*

You come to where I dwelt,  
    Yes, in this house was I,  
Green leaves hung on the air without,  
I from these window-slits looked out  
    For you to spy,  
And there were words for you that knelt  
    Within this door,  
Aye, words, and more

So late you come O near  
    And late you come And why?  
Did you not hear the wind about,  
    And a crack of branches dry?  
And see the dusty door, and fear  
    As you came by?

Shut door, and tapping boughs . . .  
    It's empty, I'm not here,  
I know not what it is looks out  
    And watches from my eye  
You're walking in a voiceless house  
    That is not I

## THE GOLDEN SPIDER IN THE MIND

Here's a bent tree  
Hated and loved it, have I, years in turn,  
Cool fan-flake roof and dappled root in fern,  
What do they say for me?  
This only here  
I stood alone, once, in a vanished year,  
Imagining  
A most vain thing

Mark Folly well  
But her divine disguising  
Who may tell?  
What golden spider in the mind, devising  
How he should fling his unseen filmy rope,  
Chanced here to shed  
On trembling beech-twīg tender overhead  
His skein of airy hope?  
On that day I  
Lay leafy-lost, sun-spēd,  
Till greenlight fled  
And the sky whispered, and a web was spun  
Never to be undone

Bent tree,  
O hatred part of me,  
By what an iron cord you bind me now  
Fast to your bitter bough!

TO W. H DAVIES

*Geoffrey  
Scott*

I would my sight were formed to stare  
    In ecstasy on cows and trees,  
To drink them in, and taste with care  
    Their sweet particularities,

And I would count them, but I go  
    Lost in a landscape of the mind,  
A country where the lights are low  
    And where the ways are hard to find.

## THE WEATHERCOCK ON THE MOOR

If I dressed up in a feather  
And cloak of blue and blue,  
And you gold altogether  
Like corn the wind runs through;

Not then would Earth's dull tether  
Our airy bodies hold,  
The sky would snatch at my feather  
The sun at your suit of gold,

The crazy cock of the weather  
That points to north and south  
Would see us flying together  
And crow from his rusty mouth;

But you gave your suit to a beggar,  
My cloak is one and black,  
And wind in corn or heather  
Ran once, and never back

EDITH SITWELL

Colonel Fantock  
When Sir Beelzebub  
En Famille

COLONEL FANTOCK

*To Osbert and Sacheverell*

Thus spoke the lady underneath the trees  
I was a member of a family  
Whose legend was of hunting—(all the rare  
And unattainable brightness of the air)—  
A race whose fabled skill in falconry  
Was used on the small song-birds and a winged  
And blinded Destiny      I think that only  
Winged ones know the highest eyrie is so lonely

There in a land, austere and elegant,  
The castle seemed an arabesque in music,  
We moved in an hallucination born  
Of silence, which like music gave us lotus  
To eat, perfuming lips and our long eyelids  
As we trailed over the sad summer grass,  
Or sat beneath a smooth and mournful tree

And Time passed, suavely, imperceptibly

But Dagobert and Peregrine and I  
Were children then, we walked like shy gazelles  
Among the music of the thin flower-bells  
And life still held some promise,—never ask  
Of what,—but life seemed less a stranger, then,  
Than ever after in this cold existence  
I always was a little outside life,—  
And so the things we touch could comfort me,  
I loved the shy dreams we could hear and see—  
For I was like one dead, like a small ghost,  
A little cold air wandering and lost

All day within the straw-roofed arabesque  
Of the towered castle and the sleepy gardens wandered

We; those delicate paladins the waves  
Told us fantastic legends that we pondered  
And the soft leaves were breasted like a dove,  
Crooning old mournful tales of untrue love

*Edith  
Sitwell*

When night came, sounding like the growth of trees,  
My great-grandmother bent to say good-night,  
And the enchanted moonlight seemed transformed  
Into the silvery tinkling of an old  
And gentle music-box that played a tune  
Of Circean enchantments and far seas,  
Her voice was lulling like the splash of these  
When she had given me her good-night kiss,  
There, in her lengthened shadow, I saw this  
Old military ghost with mayfly whiskers,—  
Poor harmless creature, blown by the cold wind,  
Boasting of unseen unreal victories  
To a harsh unbelieving world unkind,—  
For all the battles that this warrior fought  
Were with cold poverty and helpless age—  
His spoils were shelters from the winter's rage  
And so for ever through his braggart voice,  
Through all that martial trumpet's sound, his soul  
Wept with a little sound so pitiful,  
Knowing that he is outside life for ever  
With no one that will warm or comfort him  
He is not even dead, but Death's buffoon  
On a bare stage, a shrunken pantaloon  
His military banner never fell,  
Nor his account of victories, the stories  
Of old apocryphal misfortunes, glories  
Which comforted his heart in later life  
When he was the Napoleon of the schoolroom  
And all the victories he gained were over  
Little boys who would not learn to spell

All day within the sweet and ancient gardens  
He had my childish self for audience—  
Whose body flat and strange, whose pale straight hair  
Made me appear as though I had been drowned—  
(We all have the remote air of a legend)—  
And Dagobert my brother whose large strength,  
Great body and grave beauty still reflect  
The Angevin dead kings from whom we spring,  
And sweet as the young tender winds that stir  
In thickets when the earliest flower-bells sing  
Upon the boughs, was his just character,  
And Peregrine the youngest with a naïve  
Shy grace like a faun's, whose slant eyes seemed  
The warm green light beneath eternal boughs  
His hair was like the fronds of feathers, life  
In him was changing ever, springing fresh  
As the dark songs of birds      the furry warmth  
And purring sound of fires was in his voice  
Which never failed to warm and comfort me

And there were haunted summers in Troy Park  
When all the stillness budded into leaves,  
We listened, like Ophelia drowned in blond  
And fluid hair, beneath stag-antlered trees,  
Then, in the ancient park the country-pleasant  
Shadows fell as brown as any pheasant,  
And Colonel Fantock seemed like one of these.  
Sometimes for comfort in the castle kitchen  
He drowsed, where with a sweet and velvet lip  
The snapdragons within the fire  
Of their red summer never tire  
And Colonel Fantock liked our company;  
For us he wandered over each old lie,  
Changing the flowering hawthorn, full of bees,  
Into the silver helm of Hercules,

For us defended Troy from the top stair  
Outside the nursery, when the calm full moon  
Was like the sound within the growth of trees

*Edith  
Sitwell*

But then came one cruel day in deepest June,  
When pink flowers seemed a sweet Mozartian tune,  
And Colonel Fantock pondered o'er a book  
A gay voice like a honeysuckle nook,—  
So sweet,—said, 'It is Colonel Fantock's age  
Which makes him babble       ' Blown by winter's rage  
The poor old man then knew his creeping fate,  
The darkening shadow that would take his sight  
And hearing, and he thought of his saved pence  
Which scarce would rent a grave       that youthful voice  
Was a dark bell which ever clanged ' Too late '—  
A creeping shadow that would steal from him  
Even the little boys who would not spell,—  
His only prisoners       On that June day  
Cold Death had taken his first citadel

## WHEN SIR BEELZEBUB

WHEN

Sir

Beelzebub called for his syllabub in the hotel in Hell

Where Proserpine first fell,

Blue as the gendarmerie were the waves of the sea,

(Rocking and shocking the bar-maid )

Nobody comes to give him his rum but the  
Rum of the sky hippopotamus-glum  
Enhances the chances to bless with a benison  
Alfred Lord Tennyson crossing the bar laid  
With cold vegetation from pale deputations  
Of temperance workers (all signed In Memoriam)  
Hoping with glory to trip up the Laureate's feet,

(Moving in classical metres) . . .

Like Balaclava, the lava came down from the  
Roof, and the sea's blue wooden gendarmerie  
Took them in charge while Beelzebub roared for his rum

. . . None of them come!

## EN FAMILLE

*Edith  
Sitwell*

In early spring-time, after their tea,  
Through the young fields of the springing Bohea,  
Jemima, Jocasta, Dinah, and Deb  
Walked with their father Sir Joshua Jebb—  
An admiral red, whose only notion,  
(A butterfly poised on a pigtailed ocean)  
Is of the peruked sea whose swell  
Breaks on the flowerless rocks of Hell  
Under the thin trees, Deb and Dinah,  
Jemina, Jocasta, walked, and finer  
Their black hair seemed (flat-sleek to see)  
Than the young leaves of the springing Bohea,  
Their cheeks were like nutmeg-flowers when swells  
The rain into foolish silver bells  
They said, ‘ If the door you would only slam,  
Of if, Papa, you would once say “ Damn ”—  
Instead of merely roaring “ Avast ”  
Or boldly invoking the nautical Blast—  
We should now stand in the street of Hell  
Watching siesta shutters that fell  
With a noise like amber softly sliding,  
Our moon-like glances through these gliding  
Would see at her table preened and set  
Myrrhina sitting at her toilette  
With eyelids closed as soft as the breeze  
That flows from gold flowers on the incense-trees.’

The Admiral said, ‘ You could never call—  
I assure you it would not do at all!  
She gets down from the table without saying “ Please,”  
Forgets her prayers and to cross her T’s,  
In short, her scandalous reputation  
Has shocked the whole of the Hellish nation;

*Edith  
Sitwell*

And every turbaned Chinoiserie,  
With whom we should sip our black Bohea,  
Would stretch out her simian fingers thin  
To scratch you, my dears, like a mandoline,  
For Hell is just as properly proper  
As Greenwich, or as Bath, or Joppa! '

OSBERT SITWELL

Mrs Kimber

I INVOCATION TO MRS KIMBER

All hail,

Ever borne back to mind  
On any salt and stinging wind  
That grows a rind  
Of tar!

All hail,

Blithe spirit of the uncomplaining North  
(For such was Mrs Kimber,  
Dear, dwindling Mrs Kimber,  
With her quick, crenellated smile  
And simple speech  
That yet could never fail  
In metaphor and image)

Yes, all hail, all hail!

See, she approaches,  
There's her tartan shawl!  
We must find a suitable accompaniment  
For her appearance,

Let, then, no dancing, light-foot waves  
Of southern seas, however azure-lined  
And tipped with swansdown,  
Their pale sands  
Paven with pavonine or roseate shells  
And parian limbs of gods and goddesses,  
With cups of Bacchus and with ears of fawns,  
Supply their trivial music for her  
But, instead, sound forth,  
Loud cacophonous breakers of the North,  
Fringed with grey wings of sea-gulls,  
Lined with black, slimy sea weed  
And the bones of men

You, too, you mournful bells  
Toll out from upright steeples  
Of English sea-side towns,  
Sound twin tongues,  
St Peter and St Paul,  
Toll out, St Thomas and St Saviour,  
St Ethelburga and St John,

all,  
all !

*Osbert  
Sitwell*

## II. MRS KIMBER

When the sea was smooth  
—Hilly, that is, not mountainous—  
Tolling bells could not depress her.  
At night asleep,  
And busy, very busy, all the day,  
Bustling and dusting,  
She was blithe and gay,  
Singing like a kittiwake about her work  
By the first light,  
So greenly submarine,  
That filtered in at frosty windows  
—And this held equally at bay  
The spectres of the past and future,  
Spectres of the deep

She lived, or seemed to live,  
In an old house, so flashing white  
It might be carved from salt,  
That tilted down a hill,  
Ribbed, herring-bone-like, with red tiles  
And here she tended  
Her four stout sailor sons

And darned and mended  
(Darned and mended.)

*Osbert  
Sitwell*

Often away,  
One upon each of the four seas  
She kept things ship-shape for them  
—Even when at home  
Life was conducted  
To the sound of bells,  
The very rhythm of the sea,  
While their rolling gait  
Brought the victorious rush of waters  
Into the timid, solid streets of houses

Thus she was ever busy  
On her sons' behalf,  
Scrubbing floors,  
Polishing glass-cases, kettles,  
Washing doors,  
Cutting spikes off urchins,  
Whitewashing the yard

—Where pointed jawbones of a whale or two  
Supplied triumphal arches for their valour,  
And wherein,  
Caught by her youngest,  
Flopped and flapped a seal  
(With the same, sudden smile as Mrs  
Kimber's)  
'Like a cat for fish, that sea-calf'  
She would remark,  
Applauding kindred zeal

### III PROPERTIES AND PROSPECTS

This was her life, one thought,  
(Dear Mrs Kimber, whose quick, castellated smile  
Still haunts me),  
A busy life in rooms low-roofed,  
Crowded with ostrich-eggs, large, spiky shells,

And coloured veiws of foreign parts  
Prisoned in glass paper-weights,  
And little ships in bottles  
Then there were ornaments of jet,  
And, hanging on the wall,  
The Queen, on her two jubilees,  
(Head resting on imperial hand)  
Some brittle bunches of white sea-weed,

By which to skill the weather,  
And, from each window,  
An abruptly falling street  
Edged with wide seas,  
While, as the prospect from the windows of her soul,  
There stretched an acrid, waterproof perspective  
Of fishing nets and bibles,  
Red sails, red-herrings, kind tarpaulin faces,  
All washed by a sea of soap-suds,  
With Sunday as a weekly, workless culmination,  
A formal day of dreams and how-d'you-dos,  
Of boots like irons, violets in a bonnet,  
And, just visible beyond this barrier,  
Gigantic anti-climax of the usual Monday,  
Dim workaday Monday  
Set in a golden cloud of whirling dust.

*Osbert  
Sitwell*

#### IV DAY DREAMS

But often  
(When the seas were smooth)

Mrs Kimber was not there at all,  
Floated out of her surroundings  
Into an ideal world,  
A scaly universe, with Aberdeen,  
Distant and unattainable metropolis  
Of fishing nets and shawls,  
As its most fishy centre

She could almost hear them, almost smell them,  
Flopping alive upon the granite quays  
Almost see them, wriggling great mountains  
Of speckled gold and mottled silver, mostly  
silver,  
Emptied from the trawlers,  
To be appraised by expert eyes,  
And pinched by expert fingers

Gleaming, writhing hills of herring, cod and codling,  
Ling, sprat, in their season, sole, smelt and whiting,  
Plaice, lait, dab, trout and salmon  
Gurnet, pennock, wuff and billet,  
Thornback, Monk Fish (or Sea Devil)  
Eels, conger eels and sand eels,  
Cuttlefish, Black Jack and Old Fishwife

‘Fish,’ she would say, ‘is in my very bones’  
And so it was she knew the names of them,  
So very many fishes,  
And their story,  
Their times and seasons,  
When to catch ‘em, when to cook ‘em  
(Almost, one felt, she comprehended their last  
wishes)  
How the moon affected mackerel  
And the stars, a dory

## V. ROUGH WEATHER

But, when the sea was rough,  
When the deep sound of bells  
Was smothered in the gale  
That cracked its whips

At every corner of the town,  
When the thunder of the breakers  
Pounded below, at cliffs that crumble,  
Beneath the tearing cries of sea-gulls,  
At once she'd quite her visionary world.  
Then,

Remembering her husband,  
Her brain would turn all skimble-skamble,  
And her eyes, flowers of the Northern waters,  
Would strain towards the horizon,  
Where the mountains shifted,  
Watching, watching, the seas whereon there sailed her sons,  
Those northern seas,  
Lined with black, slimy sea-weed  
And the bones  
Of men

Toll from tall steeple,  
Mournful bell!

But let

Your voice be caught, caught up and smothered in  
the wind,  
So that it reach her not  
Not yet,  
Not yet

## VI COLOPHON

See how this stinging wind  
Precipitates her in the mind,  
A regular shape in crystal  
Formed by the natural processes of chemistry!  
See, there she sits now,  
Beneath the ribboned portrait of her Queen!

*Osbert  
Sitwell*

*Osbert  
Sitwell*

Come, let us pledge her.  
We need fill  
No beaker with the blushful Hippocrene,  
But, while proud kettles puff their ostrich-plumes  
And lids uprise upon a chanting gale,  
From Indian herbs then sepia juice distil  
And pledge her, crying again  
                          All hail, All hail!

SACHEVERELL SITWELL

The River God

Wind as Husbandman

First Variation on a Theme by George Peele

## THE RIVER GOD

Leap out, chill water, over reeds and brakes,  
Flash bright your sword  
Out of my hand that never shakes,  
Your voice rings louder than my whispered word,  
For my song is but a murmur down the wind and water  
No louder than the leaves that make my chequered shade,  
Cooling the bank on which I'm laid  
My urn I move not, lest the blade may break,  
Its round lip no more dropping water,  
When this, my river, at its source will die  
And sinking through the sand will bare each daughter,  
Born of this glassy world, though now they lie  
On the green bank high above that falling flood,  
And wait like snow for sun or rain to move them.  
I could not help them, were my stream to stop,  
Until it springs again from out my urn,  
But now it floods the pool and wells up high,  
Sparkling like the sun's gold eye,  
While from this plenitude it flows away  
And hides those nymphs again below its glass  
Heaped on the hills, till with the sun they flow,  
Safe runs the river now made sure with snow,  
Snow, as those nymphs cool, as white my locks,  
Which, while they also fall, tell time like clocks

## WIND AS HUSBANDMAN

*Sacheverell  
Sitwell*

Wind is husbandman, the sun's heat carrying,  
He fills fruit with ripeness and he loads the vines,  
More gentle than sunlight, bringing rain to cool them,  
For like our tender eyes that cannot look upon the sun,  
Fruit and harvest die without the shade, their nurse—  
Wind most surely is the sun's ally,  
Who works with him, running where his word commands,  
Who fetches him his goatskins filled with rain  
At his want to loose their necks and let the rain outpour,  
While upon his back each slackening skin he carries  
And empties them, now here, now there, with certain  
hand

At the cockcrow sound of trumpets,  
Feather-crested, when the sun first shows,  
Comes wind, hot-footed, to make ready the arena  
And drives forth the clouds who graze so low upon the  
plain,  
Like a flock the giants among them, while the little  
clouds  
Rest, till he moves them with their sails close-set  
Like ships that lie the night through for the wind to  
blow,  
Their canvas ready and the sailors on the look-out  
Though the same stars burn there and are answered in  
the water,  
Each fire-heart blazing low, and never lifted on a wave,  
Like fruit to blow there,  
Till a wave-crest, for the leaves, now hides it.  
Foam shows, and the waves are leaping  
Each time they scatter hiding down this image  
While, in the sky, the stars burn with fainter fire  
It is wind who into morning air, silent, creeps  
And breathes upon its windows with thin mist to hush the  
stars,

*Sacheverell Sitwell* Blowing out those candles, for the young day is born,  
And as light burns fiercer, grows the wind more strong  
Filling out their sails now so the clouds can start,  
And they tack straight down the heavens with the sea-  
wind helping  
But he plays with other measures on the high hills  
walking  
For against them, as horizon, he will heap the clouds  
Piling white hill on hill to mock their snow,  
And the sun, when he comes climbing, for a moment  
shows,  
First his fiery crest, and then his plumes too bright to  
look at  
Next, to teach the mountains of his fearful might,  
The sun, with hot shadow of his flame, attacks the clouds,  
But his echo is a fiercer bolt than any lightning,  
And, while he looks at them, the clouds are crumbled,  
Drifting in split fragments from the mountain mass  
They scatter on the wind like little drifts of snow,  
And the sun in his zenith burns without a shade  
Wind, in these summer days, works for the reaper,  
Both of them stopping in the golden corn  
And while the reaper bows down, still with his labour,  
Wind plays about his ears and shakes the grain  
In those fields more burnished where the bee works,  
There will wind shake and cause to tremble  
That glittering harvest, till the bee with his garnering  
Leaves the shaking golden bell, and spreads his wings

FIRST VARIATION ON A THEME BY GEORGE Sacheverell  
PEELE Sitwell

*God, in the whizzing of a pleasant wind,  
Shall march upon the tops of mulberry trees*  
GEORGE PEELE

I was lying in the dappled shade,  
the lute hung lifeless in my lap,  
when God stepped out of a moving cloud  
to tread the tops of mulberry trees

He hushed the trumpets, furled His flags  
and made His angels wave their wings,  
thus was blown the pleasant wind  
that wafted Him within my sight

And when I saw Him through the leaves,  
I knew He trod His winepress there,  
the nectar sliding from the mountains  
did not please Him like those berries

I touched my strings, and God looked down;  
He smiled on me, and gave me wings,  
but e'en His plumes had not the glow  
the fire of fruit lit in the air.

All the while He kept His pace  
And marched on in the whizzing wind.  
I ran behind with feathered feet  
and followed Him as best I could.

Had I gone quite far enough,  
we should have reached to Black-man's land,  
where ebon faces show out clear  
against the brooks and crystal waves

*Sacheverell  
Sitwell*

But dying daylight told the hour  
and warned me I had best turn back  
I wept at parting, then I smiled,  
and knew the purpose of these plumes

For with their help I bridged the air;  
I perched upon the silent sill,  
and from this height my lute will sound.  
and I shall catch the whispered call

STEPHEN SPENDER

The Express

After they have Tired  
He will watch the Hawk

## THE EXPRESS

After the first powerful plain manifesto  
The black statement of pistons, without more fuss  
But gliding like a queen, she leaves the station  
Without bowing and with restrained unconcern  
She passes the houses which humbly crowd outside,  
The gasworks and at last the heavy page  
Of death, printed by gravestones in the cemetery  
Beyond the town there lies the open country  
Where, gathering speed, she acquires mystery,  
The luminous self-possession of ships on ocean.  
It is now she begins to sing—at first quite low  
Then loud, and at last with a jazzy madness—  
The song of her whistle screaming at curves,  
Of deafening tunnels, brakes, innumerable bolts  
And always light, aerial, underneath  
Goes the elate metre of her wheels  
Steaming through metal landscape on her lines  
She plunges new eras of wild happiness  
Where speed throws up strange shapes, broad curves  
And parallels clean like the steel of guns  
At last, further than Edinburgh or Rome,  
Beyond the crest of the world, she reaches night  
Where only a low streamline brightness  
Of phosphorus on the tossing hills is white  
Ah, like a comet through flame she moves entranced  
Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough  
Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal

## AFTER THEY HAVE TIRED

Stephen  
Spender

After they have tired of the brilliance of cities  
And of striving for office where at last they may languish  
Hung round with easy chains until  
Death and Jerusalem glorify also the crossing-sweeper  
Then those streets the rich built and their easy love  
Fade like old cloths, and it is death stalks through life  
Grinning white through all faces  
Clean and equal like the shine from snow

In this time when grief pours freezing over us,  
When the hard light of pain gleams at every street-corner,  
When those who were pillars of that day's gold roof  
Shrink in their clothes, surely from hunger  
We may strike fire, like fire from flint?  
And our strength is now the strength of our bones  
Clean and equal like the shine from snow  
And the strength of famine and of our enforced idleness,  
And it is the strength of our love for each other

Readers of this strange language,  
We have come at last to a country  
Where light equal, like the shine from snow, strikes  
all faces,  
Here you may wonder  
How it was that works, money, interest, building, could  
ever hide  
The palpable and obvious love of man for man.

Oh comrades, let not those who follow after  
—The beautiful generation that shall spring from our  
sides—  
Let not them wonder how after the failure of banks  
The failure of cathedrals and the declared insanity of our  
rulers,

*Stephen  
Spender* We lacked the Spring-like resources of the tiger  
Or of plants who strike out new roots to gushing waters.  
But through torn-down portions of old fabric let their  
eyes  
Watch the admiring dawn explode like a shell  
Around us, dazing us with its light like snow

## HE WILL WATCH THE HAWK

*Stephen  
Spender*

He will watch the hawk with an indifferent eye  
    Or pitifully,  
Nor on those eagles that so feared him, now  
    Will strain his brow,  
Weapons men use, stone, sling and strong-thewed bow  
    He will not know

This aristocrat, superb of all instinct,  
    With death close linked  
Had paced the enormous cloud, almost had won  
    War on the sun,  
Till now, like Icarus mid-ocean-drowned,  
    Hands, wings, are found



RANDALL SWINGLER  
In Death the Eyes are Still  
The Swans

## IN DEATH THE EYES ARE STILL

In death the eyes are still  
And the folds about the eyes  
Settle, and the round ears fill  
With silence, and the mouth replies  
No more, accepting all.

These ghosts who walk, have died  
Long since, of life's negation,  
Being satisfied  
To lapse in their imperfect station  
Turning their face to the wall.

We climb the air, to find  
An exit from the plaster  
Of time if once the mind's  
Propeller slacken, the hollow past  
Receives us and we fall

## THE SWANS

*Randall  
Swingler*

Only to those who have climbed the dusky hill  
To watch the simple contortions of the land  
At evening, a beautiful and calm apparel  
For our thought, and the mature light  
Fallen slanting among trees, shaping them  
Palpably, the thought itself, the richness  
And the consistence of sensitive life,

Only then at last in the moment ordained  
By cast of beauty, the swans come, silverly skeined  
Above the water's deepened animation,  
Their hard unplaceable distant susurrus of wings  
Mixing most gently with the sun-sifted birches'  
Light behaviour and the childish wind's agility.

Only then caught in the shock of wonder  
Folding again with easy rings, the surface  
Of contention shows an equal image,  
Stealing white in the enclosing water's incredible silk  
At the grey conclusion of flight  
The locked wings the calmed heart.



PAMELA TRAVERS

The Poet

The Dark Heart

Joseph in Bethlehem

Prayer in a Field

## THE POET

Mine is a still small cry  
a pipe with one stop,  
one tune or two maybe  
run in my song  
backwards and forwards  
crying and calling  
like a lost girl  
in a wood of fauns

There is no woman  
can touch on abundance  
in the teeming world  
of moons and suns  
save in the threaded womb  
that with a silver  
net draws down thought  
to the hidden children

Our lovers must bring us  
news of the mountains,  
redden with their songs  
our quiet mouths  
They will not remember  
what thoughts, what horizons  
they drew down to themselves  
out of our silence.

## THE DARK HEART

Pamela  
Travers

The equinoxes pass  
With banners and are gone  
She sits among the seasons  
Stiller than stone.

Immutable and bowed  
Beneath the wheeling spheres—  
Lord, how can you get in  
That dark heart of hers

That has for its business  
The root and the seed?  
From these she will not stir  
Nor lift her head

For Michael and his troop,  
Nor you—But oh, disguise!  
And when black boughs break out  
In stars before her eyes

Go in with them, go in  
With summer to her thought,  
Fly to her ear upon  
The cuckoo's double note,

Be the wild sloe, no fruit  
Ripened but found her,  
Hid in the brown creek water  
You may surround her,

Press through the heifer's flank  
Where her cheek bends,  
Run in the jets of milk  
Down through her hands;

*Pamela  
Travers*

And when in evening fields  
By the wheat's green rim,  
Her lover goes to her breast,  
Lord, go thou in with him!

## JOSEPH IN BETHLEHEM

Pamela  
Travers

My house is full of kings  
Creaking with gold,  
Their crowns are piled on my pillow  
My quilt is thick with roses  
If I were to draw near  
I could not see her  
Save through a wilderness  
Of stiff bright cloaks

Oh, she was red and white  
Under my kiss,  
And passionate as midsummer  
The heart under her mantle  
Until she was betrayed  
By heavenly largesse  
And I made cuckold  
By a blazing star

We were wandering folk  
That would be turning  
Stools and querns in the villages  
And going on to the hills  
With common things  
Sweetening our talk—  
And no thought of this  
Intolerable honour,

Or down by Galilee  
Planing the oars  
For deep sea, or for shallow sea—  
Oh, there was no calling  
Her wildness under a roof  
Until this bitter  
Child took her womb and filled  
My house with kings

*Pamela*  
*Travers*

Between the thronging cloaks  
I see her now  
Bowed down beneath the holy light  
Weeping, and no longer wild,  
Those ample doves, her breasts,  
Suckling a stranger,  
Her tears dropping gently  
Down to the hay.

## PRAYER IN A FIELD

Pamela  
Travers

Saint Anthony, my little cow  
with the sedate and comely air,  
you remember? Her horns were round  
and bent like thorn boughs, and there were  
dun shadows patched upon her grey,  
that when she moved  
along the bushy dappled ways  
you could not tell her from the wood,

She has gone wild upon the hills,  
dancing with unquiet steps as though  
her teats were full of faery milk,  
beating her hooves upon the stone,  
her cool creamy udder swinging  
the tops of the grass  
as the moon rising out of the glen  
swings the sycamores going past

She would wait by the hawthorn hedge  
when Michael pulled me down into  
the speckled barley field and bent  
me backwards till the barley grew  
over us in a soft green night,  
with flowers of charlock  
bobbing between our mouths and shining  
up in the green like yellow stars,

And gently with her tongue divide  
the delicate blossom from the leaf  
until the barley field grew quiet  
Then she would come and brush my cheek  
with sweet may-blossom breath, and stand  
still as the hills  
that I might reach up with my hand  
and cool my love's mouth with her milk.

*Pamela  
Travers*

Have you no girl, Saint Anthony,  
to bend back into Heaven's lawn  
and kiss until your mouth is dry  
for a bowl of milk or spring water?  
If you'd been under a girl's cloak,  
Saint Anthony, now  
you'd know the thirst in Michael's throat  
and bring me home my little cow.

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

Song from *The Bride of Smithfield*  
The Lenten Offering

SONG FROM THE BRIDE OF SMITHFIELD

A thousand guileless sheep have bled,  
A thousand bullocks knelt in fear,  
To daub my Henry's cheek with red  
And round the curl above his ear

And wounded calves hung up to drip  
Have in slow sweats distilled for him  
The dew that polishes his lip,  
The inward balm that oils each limb.

In vain I spread my maiden arts,  
In vain for Henry's love I pine  
He is too skilled in bleeding hearts  
To turn this way and pity mine

## THE LENTEN OFFERING

*Sylvia  
Townsend  
Warner*

Christ, here's a thorn  
More poison-fanged than any that you knew  
On the north side of our churchyard it grew,  
Where lie the suicides and babes chance-born.

Christ, here are nails,  
Once driven in, will never lose their hold  
Forged at Krupp's, Creusot's, Vickers', and tipped with  
gold  
Pen-nibs that signed the Treaty of Versailles

Christ, here's a sharp  
Spear, can wound deeper than all other spears  
In baths of human blood and human tears  
Tempered, and whetted on the human heart



HUMBERT WOLFE  
Prolegomena to any Future Satire  
*From News of the Devil*

*Humbert Wolfe* PROLEGOMENA TO ANY FUTURE SATIRE

'Milton ! thou shouldst be living at this hour,'  
    but since your voice is still, and no one knows  
whether life wears an artificial flower,  
    or the deep velvet of a breathing rose,  
since no one cares whether the sudden shower,  
    that sweeps the world, is from a garden-hose,  
  
or is the ancient, unexhausted power  
    of rain that cleans, and sanctifies, and goes,  
let me, as when by innocent sacrilege  
    in some carved temple, whose hushed worshippers  
seek truth, through Buddha's lips a wandered midge  
    shrills and is quiet, so let me rehearse  
as shrill and brief, but no less dedicate,  
    'They also serve, who only stand and hate'

*From* NEWS OF THE DEVIL

Humbert  
Wolfe

And now the devil's voice rose up and out,  
like the last trumpet in an army's rout  
'Dust are the stars, and mankind's deepest lust  
only a lazy wind that stirs the dust,  
and dies again, leaving the dust as level  
whether it blew from God or from the devil  
And neither God nor devil knows or cares  
how dust may regulate its grey affairs,  
since what men call the devil, and their sense  
of God, is mankind's last impertinence  
This is self-knowledge, Arthur Say you sinned,  
it is the same as goodness in the end  
What shall it matter if a grain of dust  
fulfils its mission or its interest,  
since all its interest or mission is,  
starting with nameless dust, to end with this?  
And say one grain of dust dominion gains  
over a thousand, no a myriad grains,  
it is no more than if a raindrop tried  
shoreward to drag the whole Atlantic tide  
It does not change the other grains, or even  
change its own doom, not made in Hell or Heaven,  
but in the long decay of the first thought  
that slowly crumbles backward into naught  
Grain rubs on grain, and as they work and fester,  
contemptuous Time, unconscious, pricks the blister,  
God is not mocked, Paul Arthur, by the dust,  
and you will mingle quiet with the rest,  
as indistinguishable and as small  
as though you had not lived or died at all  
Be not afraid, all that you were, and are,  
is but the putrefaction of a star,  
and nothing that you could have done, or can,  
could change the grovelling destiny of man '



W. B YEATS

Byzantium

Death

## BYZANTIUM

The unpurged images of day recede;  
The Emperor's drunken soldiery are a-bed,  
Night's resonance recedes, night-walkers song  
After great cathedral gong,  
A starlight or a moonlit dome distains  
All that man is,  
All mere complexities,  
The fury and the mire of human veins

Before me floats an image, man or shade,  
Shade more than man, more image than a shade;  
For Hades' bobbin bound in mummy cloth  
May unwind the winding path,  
A mouth that has no moisture and no breath  
Breathless mouths may summon,  
I hail the Superhuman,  
I call it Death-in-life and Life-in-death

Miracle, bird or golden handy-work  
More miracle than bird or handy-work  
Planted on the star-lit golden bough,  
Can like the cocks of Hades crow,  
Or, by the moon embittered, scorn aloud,  
In glory of changeless metal,  
Common bird or petal  
And all complexities of mire or blood.

At midnight on the Emperor's pavement flit  
Flames that no faggot feeds, nor steel has lit,  
Nor storm disturbs, flames begotten of flame,  
Where blood begotten spirits come  
And all complexities of fury leave,  
Dying into a dance,  
An agony of trance,  
An agony of flame that cannot singe a sleeve

A straddle on the dolphin's mire and blood  
Spirit after spirit! the smithies break the flood,  
The golden smithies of the Emperor,  
Marbles of the dancing floor  
Break bitter furies of complexity,  
Those images that yet  
Fresh images beget,  
That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.

*W. B.  
Yeats*

## DEATH

Nor dread nor hope attend  
A dying animal,  
A man awaits his end  
Dreading and hoping all,  
Many times he died,  
Many times rose again  
A great man in his pride  
Confronting murderous men  
Casts derision upon  
Supersession of breath,  
He knows death to the bone—  
Man has created death

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